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TRAIL



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

JUNE 2010 No. 382 EDITOR: FRED ELLISON

Patron: Lord Fairfax

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South & South West	Dave Tilbury	See above for contact details
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East Midlands	Robin Hickin	See above for contact details

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EDITOR

A chance to change the law!! A once in a lifetime opportunity.

Liberal Democrat Leader and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg has asked the general public to bring to his notice unfair or bad legislation passed by the last government and there was plenty of that. One law springs to mind which has had a disastrous effect on Trail Riding and rendered pointless many hours of painstaking research and the making of byway claims. You could point out that an inevitable result of having our rights of way stolen from us was that people would ignore the law, ride where they thought they could get away with it and generally behave aggressively to those who would try to stop them.

Nobody condones such behaviour but it is amazing that people are surprised or shocked by it. You could also point out that the Ramblers began by mass trespassing, beating up gamekeepers etc.

If you feel incensed enough to take pen to paper (you should) turn to page 2 where you will find the reasonable man's guide to making your feelings known on this issue.

Oh I was getting so angry at the injustice of it all - it's the NERC Act that I was talking about.

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- Product Reviews • Bike Tests
- Long Term Reviews • Cover Pictures
- Anything interesting

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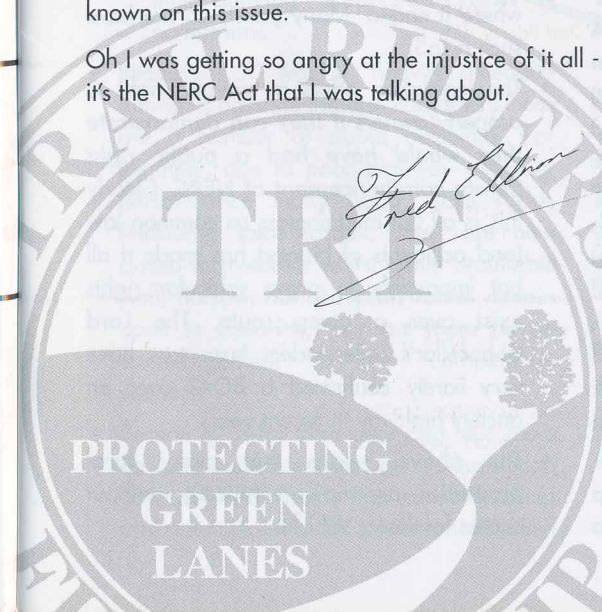
Photo from Roger Hart
Devon TRF on a cliff side lane
near Ilfracombe.

All contributions to THE EDITOR
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AN INVITATION FROM HIS CLEGGYSHIP: "TELL US THE LAWS THAT YOU WANT SCRAPPED"

Andy The Chair urges you to accept the invite.

Nick Clegg promises to give power to the people as he plans to slash and burn the statute book.

With many new Members of Parliament we have a new opportunity to make positive contact with those with the power to further destroy our recreation and by doing so our heritage in ancient roads. One thing we MUST have in mind is that organisations that do not want us in the countryside will by now already have made that contact and will be poisoning the minds of the new MPs against us. These pernicious, selfish individuals will already have those MPs previously 'converted' as their missionaries to carry forward and reinforce their message.

To counter this we should be contacting our MP and here I offer some tips on doing that. A good place to start is the *Write To Them* website (see below - it works, I've used it) which lists all your Borough/District Councillors, your MP, MEPs and Lords. This site offers the easy route of e-mailing your MP directly from the site. I also include other web resources that will be of assistance to you at some stage, for reference and fact checking. If you are writing to your County Councillor, then copy to your MP. The more that are informed the better, and if those making decisions think they are being watched and reported on, then the greater will be their integrity when voting. Had an earlier appeal to the membership produced more results we would now have a

list of assurances given by your MP when they were seeking your vote, as it is we can only supply information for Bury St Edmunds, Chesterfield and Stockton South.

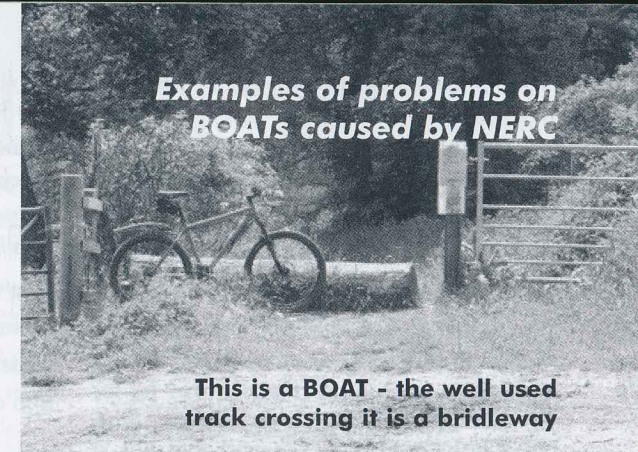
Details of the legislation in need of repeal

Basically we need to persuade our MPs that section 67 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act of 2006 was deeply flawed and needs repealing, and here are some reasons why:

- The legislation assumes that every highway authority had (as required by law) a List of Streets that was a) complete and b) readily understandable and c) provided some certainty as to where a route started and where it ended. Many (most) do not have such a LoS.
- The legislation offers a 'private' right to property owners *if they can demonstrate they would have had a public right before commencement of NERC*. Clearly this is all but meaningless as common law (and accidents of history) has made it all but impossible to prove vehicular rights exist over a given route. The Lord Chancellor's Independent Inspectors have very rarely confirmed a BOAT over an ancient highway in recent years.
- The above means that many rural properties are now technically without access for motor vehicles.

- Section 67 does not target the irresponsible, but negatively impacts on the law-abiding, removing legitimate access to OUR countryside.
- Again, due to indolence, financial constraints and many other reasons, highway authorities have not properly recorded old roads (over a period starting in 1949 or 1968, depending on your view), thus the byway network is fragmented, with many BOATs being cul-de-sac due to s.67 NERC.
- The reduction in the network available to the law-abiding trail rider is having two undesirable results.
 - a - the remaining network is (in places) becoming over used
 - b - many hitherto law-abiding riders are ignoring an unjust law, thus causing understandable tensions
 - c - many landowners think that the NERC legislation allows them to gate the new Restricted Byways, thus denying access to cyclists & equestrians
- Because s.67 was so heavily amended during its passage through Parliament there are a number of stupid outcomes. For example, due to poor highway authority performance many good, hard roads (including some tarmac ones) are now closed to motorists whilst many unsuitable (soft, narrow, out of repair) routes remain open to motorists, thus act more as an encouragement to the 'competitive' element.
- Section 67 is far from clear and four years on from commencement of this legislation some highway authorities are still telling trail riders that it is OK to ride on restricted

Examples of problems on BOATs caused by NERC



This is a BOAT - the well used track crossing it is a bridleway



This is another BOAT - same authority - same countryside ranger.

byways and bridleways because they are also on the List of Streets. If those applying the law do not themselves understand it, and if the law contains so many (and indeterminate) exemptions, it cannot be good law and should be repealed.

Reasons to repeal the Act

All of the above, and much more, are reasons for this legislation to be repealed and doing so would be in line with the promised return to sensible legislation; traditional liberties, etc.

Web Resources:

<http://www.writetothem.com/>
www.direct.gov.uk/
www.parliament.uk/
www.publicwhip.org.uk/index.php

<http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/>

This last URL will take you to an interactive page, where, by clicking on the menu to the right you go to that topic, where you have the chance to make comment.

This is from a local authority RoW Officer - you couldn't make it up:

"The path is recorded on the Definitive Map and statement as a Restricted Byway and is also recorded on the Highway Terrier as a Private Street. This means that, although the County Council only has a

duty to maintain the path to a standard suitable for those on foot, bicycle, horseback and for those using non-mechanically propelled vehicles, the path does carry full public rights, including public vehicular rights."

That's clear then - we can all ride restricted byways - but there are others that say the same about bridleways and footpaths - 'as it is also on the LoS it is OK for MPV'.

Dave Tilbury

NOTICE BOARD

EAST YORKSHIRE TRF CHANGE OF VENUE

New Meeting Location: Bay Horse Inn, 75 Market Place, Market Weighton, York YO43 3AN. Start at 7.30 p.m. for RoW and Map marking.
8.00 p.m. for main meeting.

Jim Harrison, East Yorkshire Chairman.

OPEN INVITATION TO A GREAT SOCIAL NIGHT

The trail riding part of the Teesside & North Yorks camping weekend is now fully booked. However there is to be a social evening on Saturday 31st July 2010 when riders, non-riders and their families would be most welcome to join us. There will be a band, dancing and a great raffle. The venue is the same as for the camping: Feversham Arms Inn, Church Houses, Farndale East, North Yorks YO62 7LF.

For further details please contact Richard Dodds at rikidoos@gmail.com

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

National and Regional RoW Workshops Dates to be arranged.

bmf Events: see www.bmf.co.uk

Kelso 10th/11th July 2010 **Tail End** 18/19 September 2010

Teesside and North Yorks Social Evening Saturday 31st July 2010

Two Days Trail Riding and an Evening with Tamsin Jones

21st and 22nd August. Contact Marianne Walford, 01686 430522.

MAKE SURE YOUR EVENT IS LISTED

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

RoW NEWS

VICTORY IN SUFFOLK - THANKS TO A REASONABLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Viewed from afar, East Anglia may not seem like the most attractive location for trail riding, but first impressions can be deceptive. As the locals know very well, East Anglia has more going for it than you might think.

All of the counties in the east have decent green lane networks. Cambridgeshire in particular is worthy of note being second only to Wiltshire in terms of byway mileage (source: Faber Maunsell 2005). Essex is also well served by BOATs and although Norfolk has now lost almost all of its former RUPPs to the NERC Act it still enjoys a fine network of UCRs. Suffolk too has a significant network of byways, many of which are extremely attractive. Unfortunately though, Suffolk's byway network is noteworthy for something else, something altogether less appealing and that is its extraordinary level of restriction.

Not only did Suffolk suffer a significant loss to NERC with about two fifths of previously legal routes becoming restricted byways but a whopping 22% of the remaining BOAT network is currently subject to permanent TRO! Given the unusually high number of dead end byways in the county this loss is even more severe as it tends to be the longer more attractive routes that are subject to closure.

Of course the TRF have always opposed the unnecessary or excessive use of traffic regulation orders in Suffolk as we have elsewhere. Unfortunately though Suffolk County Council have been one of those authorities who pay lip service to their duty to protect and assert our rights while in practice pursuing a policy of discrimination. It is therefore all the more surprising that their latest TRO decision

should so conspicuously buck this trend!

On the 4th May 2010, Cabinet made an order, the effect of which is to prohibit all vehicles, **EXCEPT MOTORCYCLES** from using Byway 16 Whepstead and Byway 21 Hartest, known collectively as Darney Lane.

Of course it is no accident that Suffolk County Council have exempted motorcycles from this order, it's the direct result of intervention by the TRF. I believe that this decision can be counted as a significant victory. All the more significant in fact when you look at the county's previous record in this area.

So why the change of heart? Well that's a long story which involves an awful lot of Emails, phone calls, site visits (with and without council officers) and even one or two appearances at council meetings. It's also impossible to avoid the conclusion that the unprecedented level of opposition received to other recent TROs helped to focus their minds. Key to the decision however was our success in persuading the authority to test the claim that motorcycles were damaging the lane by implementing an eighteen month experimental TRO.

Now all authorities have the option of using experimental orders to test new traffic management measures and this is fairly common practice on tarmac roads so why not do the same on byways? The answer of course is the highly political nature of green lane management. Most TROs of this sort are made in response to pressure from landowners, local residents, other users or parish councils etc. These people rarely see any value in recreational vehicle access and consequently balancing the supposedly competing interests of different users is never high on their priority list. If the TRF does not intervene in what we might call a robust manner then even in those

counties where there is no inherent bias against us our views and opinions simply get drowned out by those demanding closure.

That's not to suggest that real problems don't occur of course and it is worth noting in this case that Darney Lane had suffered its fair share of neglect, abuse and lack of maintenance. Whether any of this could be attributed to motorcycle use however was an open question. What the experimental order did was to objectively prove to a sceptical authority and wider public that despite their misconceptions motorcyclists were not causing these problems.

To be fair to the authority, once they had been persuaded to adopt this approach, they were effective in their monitoring of the scheme, consulted with all interested parties through out and on conclusion produced an honest and accurate report. That report concluded that at the end of the experimental period the lane was in a generally excellent condition and that there was no evidence of damage by motorcycles at all. This was despite the experimental period including one of the wettest summers of recent years followed by one of the coldest, wettest winters!

Suffolk County Council also deserve credit for investing in good quality repair work. While this may technically be no more than their legal duty demands the fact remains that many

authorities steadfastly refuse to spend anything on public byways. Consequently this commitment to the long term sustainability of the route must also be applauded.

In fact I find myself in the unusual but never the less pleasant position of actually thanking Suffolk County Council RoW Dept for a job well done. Of course if it wasn't for the ongoing efforts of the TRF in this county the outcome might well have been very different. Still, with similar good news at Rattlesden and a number of other suggested TROs apparently now being shelved the future for trail riders in the county looks at least a little less dire than it did a year or two ago. I think it would perhaps be too early to say that we have "turned a corner" but we are definitely holding our own!

Not only have our efforts succeeded in saving a very attractive and locally important byway but having proved that motorcycle use does not inevitably lead to damage I believe that it will now be much harder for the county to justify automatically including bikes in any future orders. We are certainly not out of the woods yet in Suffolk and the existing level of restriction continues to cause real problems but we are making progress and if we can make progress in counties like Suffolk with their record, then surely we can make progress anywhere!

Richard Sugden, Eastern Area RoW Advisor

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

ALSO WHY NOT TAKE A LOOK AT **WWW.BBTRUST.ORG.UK**



PRESS RELEASE

Thirlmere to be Permanently Closed to all Motor Vehicles.

This is a wake-up call for recreational and sporting motorists and motorcyclists everywhere. The first attack was on 'green roads'; next it will be on the network of tarmac roads in the countryside - particularly in the National Parks. If you value your freedom to drive on the minor roads of Britain, now is the time to object.

West Road is what the name suggests: a minor tarmac road running north-south along the western shore of Thirlmere Reservoir in the Lake District. Like many such roads it gets a small and sustainable level of visitor traffic, and is regularly used by touring motorcyclists, classic car drivers, and people simply 'out for a drive'.

Now Cumbria County Council is spearheading a consortium of organisations that wish to impose a permanent 'prohibition of driving order' prohibiting the public, with motor vehicles, from using this road at any time. Why? For the benefit of pedal cyclists, who should, apparently, enjoy traffic-free roads at the expense of the majority of road users.

It is certainly true that the A591 road, up the eastern shore of Thirlmere, is narrow and not at all 'bicycle friendly', but this is not any good reason to prohibit motors off the West Road completely. The level of motor traffic on the West Road is not particularly high, and cyclists can safely use it now.

The promoters of this scheme say that they want to make the West Road 'family friendly'. Well, 'families' tend not to come out at all times of the year, on all days, at all times, and in all weathers. This scheme would take away the rights of the drivers who wish to enjoy this road, for the occasional benefit of a limited sector of society.

LARA has always championed the idea of

sharing Britain's minor highways and byways, and the Government has itself introduced the designation of 'Quiet Lane', where all types of user are expected to respect the others. We see no good reason why simply designating the West Road as a 'Quiet Lane' would not be sufficient to make it 'family friendly'.

If the level of 'family use' is genuinely sufficient that there does need to be some regulation of motor traffic, there is still no need for a 24/7/365 prohibition. There may be a case for just a summer holiday month's prohibition of motors, or weekends only. The West Road is not going to be particularly 'family friendly' at 15:00 on a February Saturday, in a sleet shower, but those are just the conditions that many adventurous motorists enjoy - keeping the local cafes in business in the process.

If you want to keep using the West Road, and want to stop the start of a slippery slope towards barring the private motor tourist from our countryside, then write today to object to the total closure to motors, advocating instead a 'Quiet Lane' designation, or a time-limited prohibition of driving order. Ask that the matter be considered by an independent inspector at a public inquiry.

Read the publicity material from Cumbria County Council (which is on the LARA website) and then write to: Mr Ben Murray, Cumbria Highways, Highways Depot, Joseph Noble Road, Lillyhall Industrial Estate, Workington, Cumbria CA14 4JH.

Head your letter 'Proposed Cycleway Around Thirlmere Reservoir' and ensure that it arrives by 2 July 2010.

If this proposal goes through unchallenged then expect to see many more like it coming at you over the horizon soon.

Dave Tilbury

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Can you spot the entrance?



Many people realise these days the need for return effort in any organisation. Lane clearing achieves this in the Devon group with a combined effort of fellow TRF'ers on an un-surfaced road with a distance of less than a mile with overgrowth so dense you couldn't spot a man stood in the lane 8 foot in!

As I found out when first on site examining the lane in question, it resides in Devon a lovely lane south of Powder Ham Castle. The idea came from one of our knowledgeable members Pete Bull who discovered the lane from a recent 'ride out'.

I arranged to visit this lane with my close family. On arrival we were amazed to find the lane jammed in between two lovely tree lined banks with no end of varied vegetation blocking the way through. Armed with camera and GPS the evidence was gathered and posted on both forums for fellow trail riders to volunteer to help with the task in hand.

Once a date was scheduled I had a good response for a Sunday morning bash at this hedge carpentry (as described by one of our members ;-)) malarkey. The lane is so well camouflaged one of our members drove right

past it but soon bumped into others on their way to the destination. Assembled for the job in hand were Martin Hooper, Mark Fishwick, Rob Cowing, Noel Squibb (Chairman) my dad and myself. Various amounts of gear were popping out from vans, rucksacks to tackle what lay ahead. Once started it was clear to see we were going to be finished in time for Sunday lunch which met with approval from our Chairman LOL...

The lads got stuck in with a whole host of different obstacles ranging from giant straw bales thrown in over the bank along with dead trees with large girths, brambles with some hawthorn thrown in for good effect - nice...

Can be interesting what you find in a Devon lane just thrown in the overgrowth, we just needed a set of drums really and we would have been on tour!! (see photo overleaf).

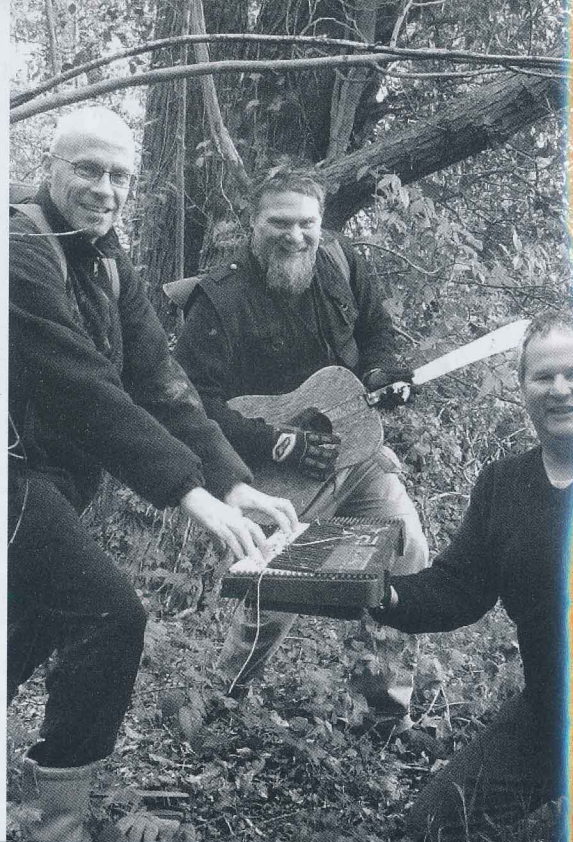
What a laugh!!

Once all the mickey taking ceased and we found ourselves looking at a new rideable lane with a 4 foot high bank at one end all still camouflaged with the exception of a bike and a half width opening (allowing for some of our larger members to get through ;-)).

We were keen to give the lane a trial ride through but none of our party had brought suitable machines with us (being Sunday it was big traillie day) but before we could even get chance to get disgruntled with this a two stroke machine could be heard coming from the distance in the form of Pete Bull, the guy who's idea was to clear the lane aptly turned up when the work load was achieved. After the usual Devon TRF greetings were exchanged Pete decided to give the lane a whirl with a thumbs up in appreciation to all our hard work, also he agreed to take the team picture of the said clearers.

Many thanks goes to all that turned out to clear this lane, with news of lanes closing across the country for whatever reason I'm glad the Devon group can make a difference with opening up and looking after a great little lane which might have been lost to the undergrowth.....

Ian Collins, Devon Group



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).

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

LANE MAINTENANCE: EAST MEON PROJECT

SAVING GREEN LANES

Whilst the TRF seems busier than ever in the struggle with self-appointed guardians of the countryside to keep green lanes open, it's nice to report that some of our groups are also finding time to maintain and protect the routes on the ground.

Eleven members of the Manchester TRF group attended a working party organised by the Peak and Derbyshire Vehicle Users' Group, Derbyshire Police and the Peak District National Park earlier this year.

Glenn Fozard, Pete Burke, Philip Kinder, Andrew McKeown, Alan Hulbert, Mike Sleaf, Tim Bond, Ian Scotson, Andrew O'Brien, Martin Collinge and Gavin Dagnal from Manchester TRF were among a working party that re-established a clear route through Pindale Quarry in Derbyshire.

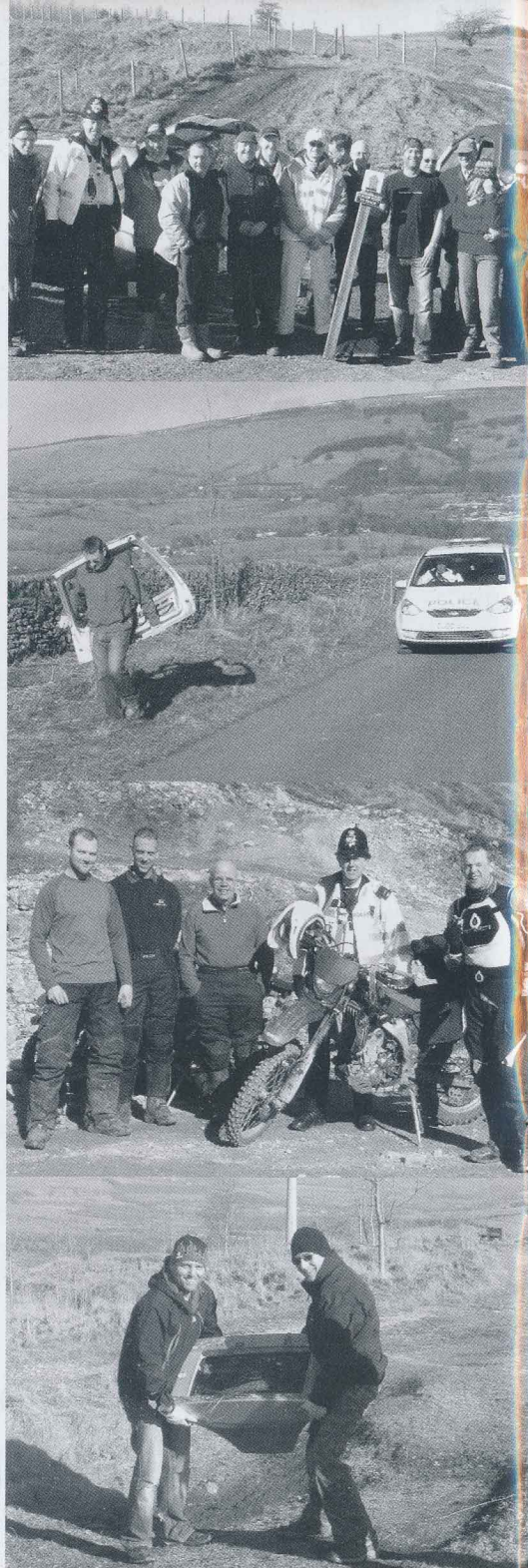
The TRF members also removed a large quantity of fly-tipped rubbish.

Sadly, some of the signs and rock barriers that were erected were subsequently vandalised by 4x4 drivers who wished to use the area as a playground rather than sticking to the right of way, necessitating further repair work.

As part of the long-running Operation Blackbrook, the police have since been active in the area.

Richard Simpson

Interesting press releases from Derbyshire Police:
<http://www.derbyshire.police.uk/news/480.html>
<http://www.derbyshire.police.uk/news/447.html>
<http://www.derbyshire.police.uk/news/435.html>
I applaud what they are doing, but I do wish they wouldn't call them off-road bikes.



DEVON TRF TEIGN TO TAMAR WEEKEND

I think the rider's comments say it all, a great weekend with 50% of those attending returning guests.

They slowly arrived on Friday afternoon, with one group arriving at lunchtime so they could get an early start and get a few lanes in before Saturday. With no pre-arranged event on Friday, it was a lovely relaxed evening with most stood around fiddling and comparing bikes. Before we knew it, it was 8pm and dinner was about to be served. Leaving the guests to it we headed off home ready to be back at Wheeldon the following morning for breakfast.

With the run leaders all ready for the off by 9am, there wasn't really time for the welcome speech as all groups were ready and raring to ride and were all gone by twenty past nine, the last group riding back in at just gone 7pm. Justine at Wheeldon, as normal, put on a fab BBQ for the evening, some had eyes bigger than their bellies!

Sunday morning groups were ready again at

9am, with run leaders having various requests to be back for different times, due to travelling home. Panic set in at nine thirty when I realised I still had a group waiting to go out and a missing run leader, typically the only number I don't have on my phone! After some frantic calling around the run leaders who were doubled up with experienced TEC's my worries were over, but in the distance I could hear the thud of a lonesome motorbike - who had had some rear wheel issues on the way over, hence being late!

With one breakdown on Saturday (duly fixed by Phil on Saturday afternoon) and one breakdown on Sunday, not a bad weekend!

Thanks to Dave and Lorn who were at the end of the phone Saturday afternoon for breakdown talk and for Brian on Sunday trying to find me a telephone number!

And of course thanks to the run leaders/tecs - Pete Bull, Paul Studley, Tina Pontin, Mark Edwards, Dave Towers, Noel Squibb and Steve Taylor who led the runs and to Martin

Hooper, Phil Pontin, Matt Ellis and Roger Hart who acted as Tec's - for giving up all or part of your weekend.

What they say:

Great event as usual. Put me down for next time. Thanks to all again particularly Steve, Tina and Phil

Thank you very much; we had a fantastic weekend with you down in Devon. As per usual the crew at Wheeldon Farm were the perfect hosts laying on great food and accommodation. A special thank you to Peter who led us around some 150 lanes and in excess of 200 miles, hardly stopping to look at the map, don't know how he does it! And finally a big thank you to you and the team that take the trouble to organise these events.

Once again many thanks for organising the event and all 3 of us are keen to return.

Just to say thanks for an excellent weekend....Really appreciate all the Devon group's hard efforts and your personal organising etc.. Spot on ...Seems you even booked THE WEATHER..LOL.. Cannot fault the whole thing, Well done all...Hope to make the pilgrimage again sometime

soon.. Please pass my thanks on to your Steve and Tina and Phil etc

A warm thanks to all who organised and guided us around. I would not have missed it for anything!!

Just wanted to say that we (the camping Southern Group) have had an incredible 2 days riding. Two very different areas with a good mix of challenging lanes and amazing views. Not sure how you managed to organise such great weather !!!! You must have good contacts !!!!! Thank you very much for organising such a memorable weekend and could you please pass on our thanks to Paul who made us feel so welcome.

It goes without question that we would all very much like to have the chance to come again next year, thanks to Devon TRF run leaders and to yourself for putting on such a good event (If you could organise it to be warmer at night that would be the icing on the cake !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (we had ice on the inside of the tent !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!) Thanks Debbie.

Many thanks for an excellent weekend. Great riding, good company and perfect weather!

Meeting of the TRF Executive

Sunday 25 April 2010

Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, CV35 0BJ

MINUTES

1. Chairman's introduction and report
 2. Apologies for absence: Arnold Brewer, Dave Tilbury, Adam Hedley, Steve Cartwright, Simon Bingham, John Gardner, Graham Till, Mark Holland.
 3. Notice of AOB:
 - Discuss the general election in the UK.
 4. Approval of minutes of meeting on 31 January 2010 (Trail March 2010)
 - Approved
 5. Update Issues
 - 5.1 Rules Sub Group
 - The charity proposal is with the Charity Commission. We cannot make any further progress until they have given the go ahead.
 - 5.2 E-shop/online shop
 - We are waiting for Paypal to give the authorisation for payments; consequently, the launch has been delayed.
 - £4000+ has been spent on stock and Arnold has received receipts for the products.
 - Don requests that Andy, Adrian and Arnold have a meeting to resolve the payment method issues.
 - 5.3 TRF 40th Anniversary
 - The BMF did not respond to our request for a prime site at their BMF Rally in Peterborough, so we did not book this event. The success of the TRF stand at the BMF Rally is dependent on the location; in the past, the club village has been poorly attended.
 - The BMF recommends a pitch at the Tail End Show and Richard Simpson supports this idea.
 - Andy would like a bigger stand at the dirt bike show and he states that we've always covered our costs at this show.
 - Many local groups are also holding events during the year.
 - 5.5 PDF version of Trail
 - There is a PDF version of Trail on the web-site. Fred issues the PDF to Adrian and Simon so that people can see it on the same day as the postal version.
 - Debbie will be happy for anyone who doesn't want a postal copy to notify her and their address label will be withdrawn.
 - Andy would like to be able to receive it via email. Don points out that there will be a cost involved in mass emailing of any document. Steve Taylor, Devon, emails their local newsletter to their members and it saves significant costs.
 - Fred notes that advertising revenues are up and that they may be reduced if we have electronic versions. Polly said that the advertising is in the PDF so there shouldn't be a detrimental effect. Andy and Robin noted that electronic versions tend to be widely distributed.
- Action: Andy to ask Adrian for costs of emailing Trail to members.
- 5.6 Officer/Member Insurance

- John Gardner provided the BMF insurance and it has been checked. The insurance is supplied by Perkins Slade and Don notes that they are a quality insurer but there is an exclusion clause for motor vehicles.
 - At the start of the every year, the BMF sends the cover note to the TRF secretary (Polly Cody). Any group organising an event where public liability insurance is required can get a copy of the insurance from Polly.
 - The officers have cover from Zurich and we have included the stock insurance on this policy.
 - If you have an event where you invite people to try out motorcycles you need to purchase additional insurance.
 - At horse events insurance is the responsibility of the event organiser and you must ask them to give assurance that they have insurance.
6. Appointment of Accountancy Services
- 6.1 Proposal to appoint Oxford Business Accountancy
- Don made a formal proposal to sub-contract the accountancy function and this was seconded by Andy.
 - The issue came out of the AGM because we need to provide in depth accountancy reports and Arnold is unable to do this on a voluntary basis.
 - Don put the work out to tender and was quoted £2500 per annum. The meeting recognized that this was a reasonable cost.
 - We need to be careful with cash and manage where funds are stored to get the best available interest rate.
 - The membership wants us to spend the money on protecting our rights and saving green lanes.
 - Arnold will continue as the TRF Treasurer and be responsible for all the banking functions, but with the accountancy sub-contracted; it will be easier for him to hand-over the role to a new treasurer.
- Changes: removal of "cost comparison", addition of "annual contract review"
- Proposal: Don and Andy propose that the TRF sub-contracts the management of the TRF accounts to Arnold's company, Oxford Business Accountancy, at a cost of £2500 per annum.
- Vote: carried.
- 6.2 Management Accounts (Arnold Brewer)
- Since Arnold was unable to make the meeting, Don was required to cover for him. Key points on the Treasurer's report:
- Membership fees are down. Don is concerned about this and would like to discuss it further at a later date.
 - Legal fees are up
 - Consultancy fees on Rights of Way are up
 - RoW Contractor fees are down due to the death of Brian Thompson. Although the work Brian started is continuing, there is a need for someone to take on new issues in the north.
 - Net assets are down
 - Fred noted that Trail costs have reduced and everyone appreciates that. Fred says that postage adds 50% to the cost of the magazine.
7. Rights of Way (Robin Hickin)
- 7.1 Fortune vs. Wiltshire CC

- Fortune is challenging the legitimacy of Wiltshire County Council's list of streets. If successful, the case would undermine the vehicular rights on all UCRs. The case is due to be heard soon.
 - The TRF and LARA are keeping an eye on the situation and exploring if there would be any other legal implications.
- 7.2 The Sarn Helen 4
- Dyfed-Powys police are prosecuting people for riding Sarn Helen in the Brecon Beacons. They have been encouraged to do this by the rangers of the Brecon Beacons National Park whose objective is to remove recreational vehicles from the national park.
 - The TRF has given advice to those of our members involved and Tim Stevens is going to act on their behalf. We have also offered advice to non-members. The alleged offence is section 34, riding a vehicle in a place other than a road. Although BBNP is only responsible for Byways, bridleways and footpaths, they have stated that Sarn Helen is not a road despite the fact that it is on the list of streets.
 - GLASS has pledged £1000 towards the court costs and Robin would like the TRF to support the action too. If successful, the case will prevent BBNP from prohibiting recreation vehicles from the park and influence the other national parks.
- Proposal: Robin proposes that TRF supports legal fees of £2500 for our members with a further £5000 if going to appeal.
- Vote: carried
- 7.3 Sewstern Lane & Lincs CC
- From Oct 2009 an 18 month temporary TRO has been in place with an application for permanent TRO.
 - Alan Kind and Richard Sugden have been trying to negotiate with the Lincolnshire RoW officer but he has not been responsive.
 - The TRO is over 2 sections so the local authority has put illegal barriers in place to prevent access.
 - The route is designated SSSI by natural England which Lincolnshire CC destroyed when doing remedial work.
 - In the past, the TRF has built good relations with the local RoW departments. We listen to their issues and agree a solution. However, more recently, local and national politicians have been more influential and the TRF has been forced to make formal complaints and instigate judicial review.
 - We are struggling in Lincolnshire because we don't have a strong local group and have not built up a relationship with the local authorities.
- 7.4 The Northern Situation
- Robin has asked Tim Stevens to write a response to the NYCC UCR document. Alan Kind has reviewed Tim's response and advises submitting it as a TRF response.
 - Leo Krone is going to write a response on behalf of the NY LAF. Andy and the other LAF members reiterate that TRF members should attempt to join LAFS.
 - **Simonburn Common:** Northumberland, Slaley Forest is suffering damage. The survey concludes that the damage is caused by motorcycles, not 4x4 vehicles. The local authority notes that recreational use has reached unsustainable levels and they are asking for their suggestions on how to manage it. The TRF won byway status for these lanes and this was awarded post-NERC, so we are upset that motorcyclists have over used it.
- Action: Andy to copy the associated document to Harry Nicholson
- **Corbeck Road:** NYCC started a new TRO consultation on Friday night. Richard

Simpson will post the information on the internet. We need a deluge of well-worded, individual, objections to prevent this TRO - do not write on behalf of the TRF. This lane will be kept open for invalid carriages.

- **Stock Dale Lane:** a motorcyclist was stopped by a local solicitor and reported to the police. There was a DMMO application on the lane and YDNP failed to mention this during the prosecution. Alan Kind is providing advice to the motorcyclist but the TRF will not support any legal action because their advice is "don't use the route".

8. PROWI

8.1 TRF/PROWI/PD-VUG: The Derbyshire Situation

- The objective of the PROWI group is to keep lanes open in Derbyshire. It is made up of members from several bodies and historically, it has been partially funded by the TRF to help with the DMMO process in Derbyshire.
- David Giles was the only member of PROWI at the meeting today.
- Derbyshire CC is rejecting the 100+ DMMOs on the grounds that they were incomplete when they were submitted. They also want to charge £50 per claim for copying the relevant supporting documentation. Don asks if electronic copies would be acceptable and cheaper.
- Since the claims were submitted, many of the original claimants are no longer available and so other members have had to take responsibility for them. Consequently, many of the PROWI group are overwhelmed with the task.
- PROWI need to work with PD-VUG and find a way to engage other people to help them. All TRF members in Derbyshire and South Yorkshire, Peak District, High Peak and Potteries, and Virtual Peaks should take an active interest in PROWI to safe-guard the future of their trail riding.

8.1 Matters of Concern (Don Oakley)

- Don has been asked to take an objective view on the work carried out by the group, its funding and control. Don would like assurance that the management of the funding is robust and he would like the PROWI treasurer to update the TRF with their accounts.
- Don would like the claims assessed for likelihood to succeed and possible level of use by TRF members before any more time and funding is invested in them. There are pre-NERC claims on the DMMO claims list and these should be pushed through the system.

8.2 Application for Further Funding

- Don would also like a formal request for further funding supported by a project plan. The TRF wants to ensure that the work continues and that we avoid duplication and omission by PROWI and PD-VUG.

9. Public Relations

9.1 Rebutting the (Motorcycle) Media

- Richard has been talking to a number of publications and would like an interview with Andy and Don in the press. Don has arranged a ride for the press but so far only TBM has accepted. The Aprilia dealership is willing to take any motorcyclist out on their bikes.
- Richard noted that the Roy Hattersley's article in the Observer is an opinion piece and he was blurring the distinction between legitimate use and urban fringe hooliganism. Richard produced a correction piece and submitted it to the Observer's corrections editors. His response that the article was an opinion so Richard said we had a right to reply. The editor conceded and will publish Richard's article on the web-site today.
- Richard has noticed a general failure in the motorcycle press to deal with trail riding/green laning in a rational or sensible way. Whenever they test bikes, they

always present them in a provocative way and their ethos is always "how do I look good in a photo shoot?" Since taking up the post of PR Officer, Richard has sent the motorcycle press regular updates but only receives support from Trail Bike Magazine. It would appear that the rest of the motorcycle press have no concern for the future of motorcycling. Motorcycle News' Mark Potter has bought a KTM and he acknowledges the TRF's work on keeping the green lane network open.

- The 4x4 magazines regularly publish Richard's articles and Great Outdoors walking magazine also publishes his letters. Harry Nicholson has noticed that the Sunday Times has recently started publishing motorcycling articles including a review of the new Husqvarna trail bike where it mentioned the TRF.
- Robin believes that when we see unfavourable articles then the TRF needs to rebut them so that we are not seen to approve of unsustainable or anti-social behaviour.
- Richard is happy with the original PR budget

9.2 Engaging with Others

- The police are often ill-informed about vehicular rights of way.
- TRF members should look for opportunities to work with the local enforcement bodies and build up respectful relationships.
- The meeting recommends that TRF members support the Bike Safe initiatives in their area.
- The TRF has a good reputation for using legal routes and members should strive to maintain that reputation.

10. Other Officer Reports

Membership Secretary:

- Debbie is currently spending 2 hours a day on membership queries.
- Many people have not renewed and Debbie has been told they have lost their jobs and sold their bikes. In addition, many new members expect more from the groups than they're able to give: map marking, weekly rides etc.
- Oxford and South London & Surrey groups have been actively canvassing the members to (re)join.
- Only 20 groups have submitted a group return for 2010. The group return contains important information which enables the national officers to know who to contact in the local areas and where local meetings are held.
- Members are asked to keep Debbie up-to-date with their email address so that they can be easily contacted for mass emailing and so that their access to the TRF web-site works.
- Don would like us to take membership monthly via direct debit. Debbie believes that this will help with membership.

CCPR

- The Bingo Lotto money has been spent on lawyers.

South Contractor - Dave Tilbury

- Dave has been working mainly on TROs specifically the ones around Stonehenge. Many of the objectors have been from non-vehicular users including a disabled group.

LARA - David Giles

- LARA is our bedrock of expertise.
- There have been significant changes to its membership whereby it has lost the ACU and the MCI but it has retained the AMCA and so the BMF as associate members without voting rights.
- Consequently, there is limited funding for LARA so any new projects will need

separate funding.

- LARA has started a forum and encourages other groups to join.

BMF - David Giles

- The BMF fights for our rights both nationally and in Europe. The political lobby arm of the BMF is very successful.
- The BMF are recovering from their management issues.

Editor - Fred Ellison

- Fred provided membership forms in Trail and asked the members to seek new members. Subsequently, Debbie has received 1 new member via one of these forms.
- Group officers are encouraged to take completed membership forms and subscription moneys from members and submit them to Debbie.

AOB

AOB 1: The general election on May 6.

- All members were asked to look at the "Hit Your Prospective MP with This" article in Trail and on the web-site then write to their prospective local candidates.
- Andy has sent a letter to each of his prospective candidates but as yet, he has received no responses. Andy would like to know if members get any feedback because he has been asked to report back to the All Parliamentary Group for Motorcycling.

AOB 2: Arnold has published a request for help working towards the quality standard. The volunteer doesn't need to be an expert because the CCPR contact will provide support.

AOB 3: Arnold and Don were seeking insurance for members. Dodson has come up with a scheme for members and they will donate to the TRF. He also does insurance for many other motorcycle groups e.g. school boy cross. Barclays have a personal accident scheme. We will put these on the web-site as member benefits.

AOB 4: Reiteration of the payment of honoraria

Arnold will be paying officers honoraria shortly including any outstanding payments. Don hopes that the sub-contracting of accounts will resolve this issue. Andy notes that the payment of honoraria is outdated.

AOB 5: Robin offered to put on regional rights of ways workshops

AOB 6: Warwickshire TRO

- During the process of making a recent TRO in Warwickshire, there was a request to make a variation to exclude motorcycles. The council officers rebutted the variation and the TRF may take the council to judicial review. Alternatively, we may take the council to court under section 122 over their duty to protect the rights of users. The West Midlands group has already allocated funds for action. Currently, the TRO is being reviewed by the local authority's cabinet, who are not experts in RoW law.
- A TRO can be challenged if the original reason for the TRO no longer exists.
- David Giles noted that the ombudsman has no authority and Richard Hawker noted that the ombudsman will only deal with you if you have been personally discriminated.

AOB 7: All Party Motorcycle Group

- Andy attended the initial meeting of the new group along with many other representatives.
- The main issue was the tender of parking management of motorcycles in Westminster.

9. Date of Next Meeting: - check the TRF web-site forum for details.



Patron: Lord Fairfax

WHY JOIN THE TRF?

8 GOOD REASONS

FELLOWSHIP

The TRF is the only motorcycling organisation fighting for Trail Riding - all the way to Parliament

CLUB RUNS & EVENTS

TAKE IN BREATHTAKING COUNTRYSIDE

ASSIST WITH THE CONSERVATION OF YOUR HERITAGE

LEARN NEW SKILLS

INFORMATIVE MONTHLY MAGAZINE

MEET PEOPLE WITH COMMON INTERESTS AT HOME & ABROAD

ORGANISED RUNS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

CODE OF CONDUCT

USE ONLY VEHICULAR RIGHTS OF WAY

Trail riding is only lawful on public roads. If in doubt, check with the Highway Authority or the TRF. Motorcycles and riders must be road-legal. Green Lanes are subject to the same laws as surfaced roads.

KEEP TO THE DEFINED WAY ACROSS FARMLAND

Wheels can damage crops and grass. Wandering from the road onto farmland or moorland is trespassing. If in doubt, ask.

GIVE WAY TO WALKERS, HORSES AND CYCLISTS

- as a courtesy. On narrow lanes, stop and switch off engines.

FASTEN GATES TO SAFEGUARD STOCK

- except those tied open for farming purposes. An open gate invites animals to stray, endangering themselves, crops and traffic.

TRAVEL AT A SAFE SPEED

Ride at a reasonable speed, taking regard of conditions and visibility. This should not exceed the voluntary maximum of 25mph.

RIDE QUIETLY

Machines must be effectively silenced. Use the throttle with discretion as noise can offend.

HONOUR THE COUNTRY CODE

Respect the countryside and those who live, work, and play in it. Green lanes can be valuable habitats, so take special care in spring and early summer.

IDENTIFY YOURSELF

Carry your membership card with you when trail riding, so that you may identify yourself as a current member of the TRF - and display a current membership sticker.

ACKNOWLEDGE OTHER USERS

Trail Riders should acknowledge the presence of other green lane users with a friendly wave or other suitable greeting.

Trail Riders Fellowship

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

- Please complete the details below and return the form with a cheque or postal order (payable to the TRF) to: **TRF Membership Secretary, Debbie Hutchinson, Marcliff, Bakers Hill, Exeter, Devon EX2 9TE. Tel: 07966 438907.**

PLEASE PRINT DETAILS CLEARLY

First name(s)

Surname/Family name

Joint name (if applicable)

Address

County Postcode

Tel no

Email

Which local Group do you attend (or propose to attend) if any?
(see www.trf.org.uk for list of Groups)

What bike(s) do you use on the trail,
eg: Yamaha DT125R

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

SINGLE MEMBER

Jan-Dec £40; Apr-Dec £30; Jul-Dec £20; Oct onwards £50 including the following year

JOINT MEMBER

2nd member at same address, 1 copy of TRAIL to share

Jan-Dec £60; Apr-Dec £45; Jul-Dec £30; Oct onwards £75 including the following year

LIFE MEMBERSHIP - £400.00

• Please send me extra bike stickers (£1 each) £

• DONATION TO THE FIGHTING FUND £

Fighting Fund donations are at your discretion
but very important in order to defend our rights

TOTAL AMOUNT £

Tick box if you are a full (individual) member of: BMF MAG ACU

Other - please state - eg: ACU, NFU, CLA, National Trust, English Heritage

Where did you hear about the TRF?

Do you require more membership forms? How many?

I wish to join the Trail Riders Fellowship and I confirm that I have read and agree to abide by the Articles, Memorandum and Bylaws of the TRF, a company limited by guarantee. I agree to ride only unsurfaced rights of way which I genuinely believe to be vehicular.*

Signature:

*All membership details are stored on the Fellowship's computer and will only be used in accordance with the TRF Rules.**

**Available from www.trf.org.uk or from the Membership Secretary.*

Stealth Man Goes to North Wales

(But you didn't see him right?)

Several weeks ago, Devon TRF members collectively entertained the trail riding equivalent of 'The Stig' in the form of 'Timpo' who hails from Wirral, up near Scouserland.

He cheerfully rode pretty much all of Devon in a five day period, sleeping in his van, never needing sustenance and only occasionally oiling his chain, by way of bike maintenance.

Just how did he do that? Were those occasional references to 'the Zen state' a clue? Or are we just kidding ourselves that we are fairly handy with the bike. It's all relative after all.

Anyway, a small group was put together to follow up his offer to show us around some of his patch, which seems to be the top half of Wales, an area I've never ridden but have drooled over the memory map with its miles of high up open moor trails. Mmmmmm.

Langollen was the location, a mere 250 miles away and a bunkhouse for eight was booked at the Wynnstay, with B&B at £25 pppd. A secure courtyard for the vans with a narrow access apparently available.

Mark Edwards and Dave Muller representing South Devon got there first (you've got to get up early to beat these guys). Then me and Andy Charlton from Exeter area, with those East Devon laggards Roger Hart and Dave Clarke, finally turning up just after we did. Dave and Mark had found Timpo and somewhere to eat, the rest of us grazed en route.

The narrowness of the entrance nearly beat us, as the almost new transit van I had borrowed from Jamie was only 6" narrower than the gap. The vehicle had to be exactly square to the gap, off a narrow street and the mirrors folded in. No one would want to try



and steal a van if it took 10 minutes to shuffle the thing out.

I got the 'dogs bed' which looked a bit better than a bunk bed (the 2nd night I put the mattress on the floor) and we all had ear plugs to drown out the racket of everyone else's snoring.

So bright and early Saturday we were all up, breakfasted and wondering what to wear as it's not too cold and it had finally stopped chucking it down. It's never easy is it? Bikes out of the vans and top up the fuel tanks (there's no fuel station in Llangollen) and I hit my first mechanical snag. Fuel dump. Tap the carb, same, hit the carb, no better. Hey no panic, I've brought both bikes in case anyone needs a spare. Heh, that'll be me then. CRF 230 fuelled and running, XR4 back in van and off we go.

Riding out of town we saw some big fallen trees, carved to look like a group of Dinosaurs, on top of a hill. Neat. Up a gentle rocky climb that carved across a hill and we were into the trails.

Probably easier to describe the trails in general terms rather than individually. Lots of rocky climbs, lots of open going, lots of greasy centre slots, lots of gates and LOTS of water. Well it had been raining hard for the previous 24 hours. Brilliant.

The rain started again within a couple of hours but no one seemed too concerned.

I recall my first badger when I felt obliged to acknowledge a couple of beaters who were walking up a trail, where we had briefly found ourselves in the middle of a pheasant shoot. (One shot bird flopped down a few feet from us). So taking one hand off the bars to wave, whilst attacking a slimy centre slot might not have been too smart.

I was entertained to see a mild trout tickle and a badger from an unnamed other, who I don't recall ever seeing at rest like this. Proper greasy in places, it was.

A dinner stop was eventually achieved at a garage at 2.00 p.m., a mere 5 hours after setting out. Not that Timpo needed any sustenance, just a bit of fuel. I had lost my front brake a couple of hours back on the trail (rear drum brake ineffective within 100 miles of fitting new shoes) and was getting a bit too much adrenaline at times, so was glad of a chance to investigate. We soon found that there was no brake fluid in the reservoir. The best I could find in the garage was ATF, a bit thick but fluid. We eventually got the air out and a working, if spongy brake. That'll do. Let's go.

More great lanes, too many to recall and we found ourselves at a bottom, talking to another group of riders with three dead bikes. They had all crossed the ford that was dangerously deep and fast flowing and had been pushed over by the water. One was pushed under his bike and could easily have been drowned. Water doesn't normally bother me but I argued against trying this particularly ford. Fortunately it was unanimous.

So when Timpo said "here's a lost lane I found through doing research, it's a bit overgrown but quite long, I'll follow you guys up", we half expected it to be a bit snotty, cos he seemed to enjoy sending us ahead on the interesting ones, so he could watch the action.

Andy was in front followed by Dave M then me, Mark, Roger, Dave C and Timpo at the back.

"What's the hold-up then?". "Err it's a bit wet. How long is this puddle?". "Dunno, just keep going, it must be rideable". Trouble was the stream had altered its course due to a blockage forming and the lane was flooded to seat depth for about 50 yards, with a soft bottom and plenty of vegetation, as you would expect from a little used lane.

Andy got through; Dave M had his foot grabbed by something and went down, fully

immersing his bike. I said "let me get past and I will come back and help" then footed into nothing and went down, immersing the bike far enough to part fill the air box and stop the engine. Mark was the next down but only a quick immersion. The others got through.

So three dead bikes and a long way from home. Oh dear. Teamwork got all the bikes to a dry place, the stream rerouted. We quickly set about de-watering the bikes. Mark's came back to life first, mine was next but I had to have a battery boost, as I drained my battery and there's no kick-starter. Dave's finally came back on line and we were able to get underway. Reckon we were stopped for about half an hour. Could have been a lot worse. Timpo was amazed at what had happened to the lane as he had never seen a puddle there. If he had been leading he would probably have turned us round.

It was getting pretty gloomy as the rain clouds were pretty full and low but we had a fair way to go so it was lights on and keep going. I recall riding up a very smooth tarmac road with a huge 'U' shaped valley on our left with big waterfalls and when we got to the very top of the pass we turned right to cross some wild moorland. A brief stop for a puncture in Mark's front tyre that the 'fix a flat' goo actually fixed! As it got darker my lights got dimmer, possibly due to water getting into something electrical and when we came to do a very long open moor crossing known as The Wayfarers, I suggested that we travel in close formation with a bike ahead and behind me staying on the right as much as possible with me staying on the left side. This turned out to be a wonderful experience. We all seemed to benefit from each other's lights and I was able to ride as though I had a perfect working light. This trail was about 5 miles long and you could tell that we were on the best trail of the day. Brilliant, except that when we finally got to the end we were two riders down!

Timpo went off in search of Andy and Dave C while I fretted about my battery getting so low I might not get a spark and within a few minutes, sure enough, my engine died. Turned out I was out of fuel as switching to reserve and bump starting got it going. Where's all my fuel gone then??? Everyone else had plenty.

Eventually Mark went back to try and find the three missing riders and after a further wait, they all showed up. Andy's bike (XR250) had lost its HT. They eventually got it going but it died again. Andy was able to freewheel to where we were waiting though. A thorough clean up of the plug, HT cap and lead and the nasty gallery the plugs hide in, got the bike going and we were ready to roll.

Timpo wanted to carry on using the trails as this was a more direct route back to Llangollen but the consensus was we should road it back, in case of further breakdowns.

It was a very long and cold 12 miles (it felt like double) and I was very happy to eventually see the lights of a biggish town. Blimey 7.30 we'd better get moving if we want to eat. Then we discovered the ultimate luxury for returning trail riders. One side of the courtyard where we were parked had a fancy new timber framed open sided barn with tables underneath and PATIO HEATERS!!! Can you imagine a nicer way to get changed and sort the bikes and gear out? Quick shower and change and let's go find some food. Llangollen is a really nice town with plenty of places to eat and drink. The river Dee was very angry and some really big trees were pinned against the ancient bridge in the middle of town.

The eating place was very busy and we were all impressed by the staff employed there. Do they always have such long legs in Eastern Europe? Great food and atmosphere. I was quite happy to stay there and chat but we eventually wandered back to the digs for a pint by the fire and more chat.

Sunday morning and we were up at seven so we could sort the various bike problems. Andy got the carb opened up on the XR4 and found some slices of 'o' ring that had got stuck above the float needle so that was me sorted. Thanks mate. Then he had to do his front puncture but no time to work out a way of keeping his plug 'n' HT lead clean. Breakfast done and on with dry riding kit because the central heating rads in the bunkhouse were very effective and we were ready to roll by 9.30.

By popular demand, we went back to that amazing trail we rode in the dark and picked off the trails we missed out coming back via the tarmac. Wow, Timpo really had saved the best for last. I could have stayed on that one trail all day and just soaked up the view. Quick photo at the top and on to try and cover a northern loop. Quick fuel stop at around 11.00 am but no munchies and the flavour of the day developed. For some reason Timpo thought our trail tyres were not necessarily the best tyres and I got the impression that he was testing them/us, because the trails got snottier and more challenging as the day went on. One particular climb, he waited at the rear and advised the riders nearest him that they could have a breather cos this lane usually took an hour to get everybody up and recovered. Heh, heh, apart from Hamster getting a bit of cramp, we all romped up it. So Timpo was getting a bit desperate in his efforts to find something that would stop us. In fairness the rain made everything so gloopy that our tyres stayed clean, a bit drier and things might have been very different.

I managed to get caught out by some vegetation that ripped my gear lever apart. It was totally unusable but fortunately Dave M had a spare yam gear lever zip tied to his bike and it fitted the XR4 well enough to allow us to continue. A big thank you to Dave then!

We bumped into a small group from Derby

and they told Timpo about a climb that had beaten them. Surprise, surprise, suddenly we were at the bottom of a climb that the Forestry had recently reinstated. Timpo explained how we could ride around this but naturally we wanted to have a go. Timpo romped up with his gert chunky rear tyre and apart from Dave C, who I've never seen beaten, the rest of us failed miserably. About as steep as Oxgrove/Brockhole Wood on Exmoor but looser, wet material with clay mixed in. So, satisfied that he had found our limits, at 4.00 p.m. Timpo finally took us to a garage for lunch. I had nudged him a couple of times regarding a pit stop but as long as we had enough fuel he saw no reason to stop. I said "what about rider fuel?" and he said "I've trained myself not to need food". Doh!

By the time we left the garage it was getting dark and we had a bit of tarmac to do. This was briefly interrupted by Roger's chain slider picking up under the chain. It was quickly rectified but I noted a frown on Timpo for the first time. He had a couple of lost lanes to show us that he had researched and I guess he wanted them to get used. Who were we to argue? Nice lanes too. Then it was up onto the moors for what turned out to be the final lane of the day. Another beautiful high moor pass in the gathering gloom but we got to see it as the light faded. I steeled myself for another hour's riding to get back to Llangollen and was delighted to see the town ahead after only a few minutes. We were finished by 5.30 so an easy day really.

Timpo negotiated a tray of hot coffee from the Wynnstay Landlord while we fuffed around under the patio heaters. Decadent luxury that we had never dreamed of. Pack up, multiple promises to return, thanks all round, wriggle the vans out through the narrow gap and hit the road for the five hour journey home. A pretty special weekend and huge thank you to Timpo, I reckon.

Noel, Devon Group

Cowm Leisure Fun and Skills Days

A couple of months ago, I got a phone call from John Whittle, the proprietor of Cowm Leisure, a site long used for unofficial trials practice, now a thriving, weekend practice facility. He was wondering whether the TRF would be interested in taking part in some trail bike trials. Trail bike trials have never gone down well in our area and to cut a long story short, we ended up with introducing a concept of non-competitive skills days. The aim was to raise riding skills, using extreme enduro hazards and to coach people in the gentle art of fine control, to cope with trials type terrain. With the loss of many really challenging lanes there are fewer and fewer chances to build confidence over technical hazards.

So far we have run three sessions, with the bulk of the riders coming from Manchester TRF. The format is, that after registration and safety briefing, the group is split up by experience and/or ability. One group is then taken on a follow my leader orientation run around the site, while the other group is shown how to tackle the enduro-style hazards.

With extreme enduro, the skill is to approach each hazard at the correct speed. In some cases, this does not mean that faster is better. Too fast and the bike is launched into space, with no control on landing. The hazards included rows of tyres, rock slabs, logs and

even riding over a portacabin. Several of my trials-riding friends gave up their time to offer advice and tips and to lead small groups around the challenging climbs and descents.

The high spot of the day, for me, was watching a couple of extreme enduro riders showing what is possible, with enough nerve. Huge rock steps and massive concrete drains are no problem to these guys. One guy called Stotty is just incredible. He attempts hazards that trials riders would, and do, balk at. On the first event, trials champion, Shaun Morris was to be seen practicing. This was a bit like going to play tennis in the park and seeing Andy Murray on the next court.

The groups were taken to various parts of the site to have a go at climbs, descents and various bits of rockery. People who had never ridden a trials bike before, got the chance to



have a go. The site also caters for 4x4's and it is a good challenge to ride a trail bike around the various 4x4 routes. The 4-wheeled vehicles cope with mud better than the 2-wheeled ones, as I found to my cost, on the last outing.

The general feedback is, that riders were delighted in being able to cope with hazards they previously thought were beyond their capabilities.

There are a number of beginner trials at the site throughout the year, with a trail bike class, and there will be further opportunities later in the year to improve riding skills. For further information contact John at www.cowmleisure.com

Rodger Davies



Oh dear Mr Honda what have you done?

Once one of the most reliable motorcycle manufacturers, turned out a Lemon.

Having ridden across Spain from Santander to Tarifa and crossed into Africa with Wildcat Adventures, day two into Morocco heard a loud bang and a cloud of blue smoke pour off the exhaust pipes of my, not-so-trusty, Honda CBF1000 A7.

Not unheard of as I discovered later.

Apparently the alternator sheared, causing an oil pressure build up, which blew out the rockerbox gasket.

What was meant to be a seventeen day motorcycle tour turned into a (dare I say it) 4x4 odyssey followed by an extra week in a hotel, awaiting parts and a repair.

More of that later.

What can you say about Morocco? It is a third world country, with all its attendant foibles. Some terrible roads, with terrible drivers. The mountain roads were littered with the results. Not that many people, outside the main cities, can afford cars. The donkey cart is the main form of transport.

The best example was two lads sat on one donkey. One faced to the front to steer, the other faced to the back, to beat its bum with a stick.

The moped is also very popular. I saw one lad on a 50cc moped dragging ten, twenty foot lengths of steel reinforcement rods along a main road. I was sat in a café at the time and you could hear him coming down the road a

mile off. No-one seemed to mind.

Away from the towns there was little traffic apart from the local lorries and one or two travel homes.

Where there were roadworks or a washout there were no single file traffic jams to contend with, the traffic just took to the hard piste until it was safe to rejoin the carriageway.

Driving hazards were begging children, hobbled donkeys, loose dogs and speed traps alongside the roadside.

Once you had learnt the rules of the road ie. "There are no rules", you started to get in the groove. Not that I got much practise.

Through every town and village pedestrians ruled supreme. People were sacrosanct. They filled the roads and did not take any notice of vehicles. No doubt they would be considered as the envy of the western world, at least by those who want to reclaim the streets from the motorists. Culture shock, I'll say!!

In between all the poverty or basic subsistence living, were four star hotels for the tourists.

The landscape was barren, as expected, with fantastic geological features everywhere. Green areas, usually Palmaries, in River Gorges and Artesan basins with almond trees, came as a pleasant relief after miles of arid piste.

I had always wanted to experience the desolate, open spaces that I had seen on the Paris-Dakar over the past twenty years. Reality and expectations were a mis-match. There were a lot of hard miles between highlights, as with most trips abroad. Coffee breaks in villages (carefully chosen by our leader) allowed us to drink in the atmosphere, touch base with the locals and smell the aromas.

The Atlas mountains were magnificent in their winter coat although our route did not get to



the snowline.

We took in the Dunes around Merzouga, the interesting and affluent cities of Ouarzazate, Tata and Taroudant before heading for Marrakech, then the long haul back to Tangier.

John and Brigitte of Wildcat Adventures have this tour well sorted. The chaos of the port entry at Tangier (after an hour's delay by Customs officials, two hundred cars started blasting their horns in protest) our exit into Africa was smoothed over.

The Hotels are superb and some were very atmospheric, giving you a real flavour of Berber hospitality.

The traditional meals served in a Tazine were hot and flavoursome although some hotels did tone the spices down to accommodate western palates.

We also stayed in a hotel that was once a genuine Palace. The woodwork and stonework was absolutely beautifully and the furnishings were unpretentious antiques, giving you a glimpse of life in the past.

Having said that Morocco is still one of "The Haves and the Have-nots".

One thing is for certain, experiencing the Moroccan Adventure (and it was an Adventure) made me appreciate the relative comfort and safety of European travel.

When my bike broke down Brigette and Jim, the backup man (worth his weight in gold) sprung into action and the bike was soon on the trailer, heading for the next hotel, as I took up a seat in the 4x4.

Brigette was kind enough to tolerate my presence for the rest of the trip, for which I am personally very grateful.

John organised the bikes' transport out of the country and back to Europe, for a consideration, where the RAC rescue took over.

He also re-scheduled my ferry crossing, which demonstrates the value of an experienced backup team, who can ease things over when things go pear-shaped.

A word of warning. INSURANCE. INSURANCE. INSURANCE.

I failed to check that the Honda recovery and

guarantee covered Morocco. I assumed an International company would cover all eventualities. Wrong.

My medical insurance included Morocco as "part of Europe" but Honda's guarantee was worthless outside of mainland Europe.

Another warning ALWAYS check your Medical Insurance covers riding a motorcycle over 125cc. The premium is twice as much but without the extra fee the insurance is worthless, if you are riding a motorcycle with an engine capacity over 125cc.

It is up to you to check the small print, as one guy found out to his cost.

So an adventure that produced more turns than I expected. It certainly could have been much worse considering all aircraft were grounded due to the volcano and stranded people were being driven to the ferry ports, oversubscribing the bookings. Just as well I had to stay, near a beach, in Tarifa, awaiting repairs in Algeciras, while things blew over.

When I eventually did arrive on English soil, it was so cold, I had to stop and pile on four more layers of clothing before I could ride the 400 miles home.

Good old Blighty don't you love it.

Happy motorcycling wherever you are.

John Robinson, T&NYTRF Group

OVER TO SPAIN FOR SUN (not) RUN

Well two weeks ago today me and two of my mates (one a member, other soon to be), left from Plymouth to get a ferry to Santander for some of what we hoped to be very good off roading rides and plenty of sun.

Well from the start of the trip it looked as if we were doomed with the weather. Arriving in Spain we headed for the high end stuff of the mountains, and what views that would give us, it was awesome looking toward the mountains we were soon hoping to be riding!!

Anyway once we were up there in the hills it was not meant to be as a small avalanche forced us to turn back and look elsewhere for our pleasures. I will say though that riding the roads and the trails was great fun (despite the local Guardia fining all 3 of us 105 euros each for not having lights on at midday).

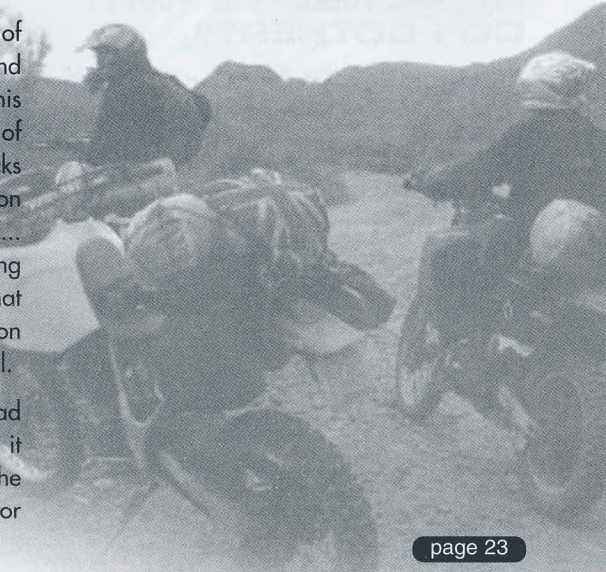
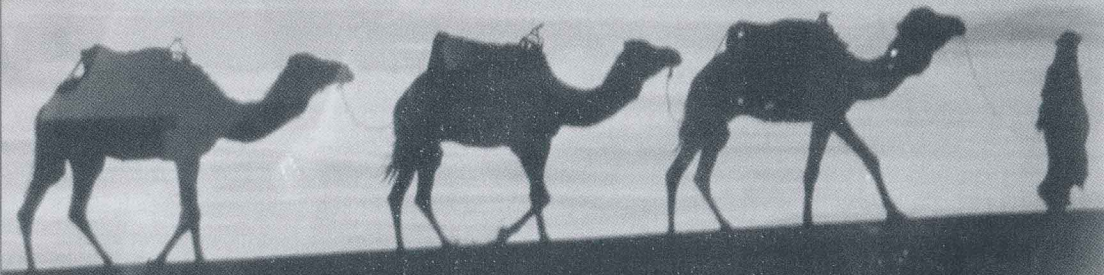
Plenty of rain and bad weather was in front of us but we would not allow that to beat us and we pressed on heading further south as this would allow for better weather. Plenty of camping and good old army ration packs were to be had... feels like being back on exercise when you're eating them... lovely... the views of the new areas we were riding were again great, camping by a river that could have quite easily been in the Amazon was something special to wake up to as well.

We ended up following a route that we had not already planned, we happened across it by chance whilst heading to Zaragoza, the route is called the GR99, its mainly a route for

walkers but can be accessed by riders too, and its well worth it. I had a couple badgers, but was no problems with the bikes or any of the kit (mind you the b***** thing was heavy with the rack and LR tank).

On route we managed to find some old buildings on a couple of days and after 11 hours of riding it really did not matter what the condition was (it was welcome).

One thing I did find amazing about the areas we were riding was the amount of empty buildings some of which had recently had new windows and doors fitted, but was quite obviously empty... till us lot arrived and we had to use it. Weather was atrocious and we



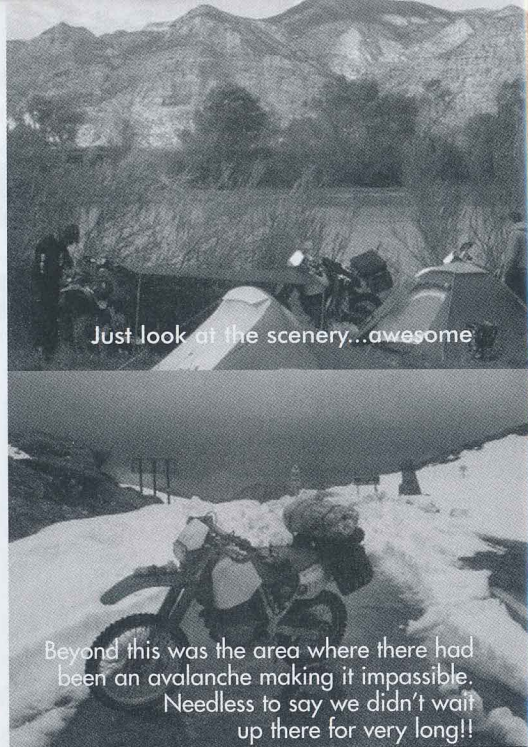
needed a brew... No doors or windows were forced and no mess from us was left.

Right I'm not going to bore you any more with my words, I cannot put into text what I have enjoyed or felt whilst doing this trip, all I'll say is it was fantastic and I will be doing something similar in the future.

Do also have to say big massive thanks to Brownie/RichXR for the use of the rack that held up great with all my gear, and also SteveXR33 for use of the Long Range tank, I could not have completed such a trip without either, so big thanks guys, I owe you all a nut bar and an orange juice....

Enjoy..

Chris Featherby,
Devon Group



Just look at the scenery...awesome

Beyond this was the area where there had been an avalanche making it impossible. Needless to say we didn't wait up there for very long!!

POSTBAG

RESPONSE TO "WHY DO I BOTHER?"

I couldn't let Steve Pighill's letter in May's TRAIL go without adding my fourpence worth.

How I understand Steve's frustration; I've been there and, I expect, so have many of us. Many times have I spoken to so called trail riders who are behaving antisocially and obviously illegally and the various responses you get from "I went into the council and they said it was all right" and "I didn't think it was necessary to be taxed and insured as I'm not on a road" also "I thought a bridleway was ok for motor bikes" to "where else can I take the kids to play on their new mini bikes?"

The idiotic content of their excuses makes it

obvious that they haven't a clue what they're talking about and when you start to explain the legal status of the lane you can either see their eyes glaze over with incomprehension or they just don't want to be warned that they're breaking the law..

I once spoke to a guy who was riding up a very challenging chalky hill in Surrey with a toddler balanced on the petrol tank, no helmet or other protection and his little hands gripping the bar brace. How any parent could put his 3 or 4 year old child to such risk of serious injury is beyond comprehension. This same hill is, I believe, at present, the subject of a legal action by an injured user against the County Council; that is a measure of how difficult the stretch can be. His bike was un

taxed and he admitted that it was uninsured with no MOT as well and when I pointed out that what he was doing was not only highly dangerous [for the child] but totally illegal his retort was "ok mate we'll go and ride on the other one." On enquiry "the other one" turned out to be Woolvens Lane; equally illegal but less dangerous [for the kid!].

To get back to Steve's letter, what should his reaction be to such blatantly illegal and antisocial behavior when faced with the situation he describes? My answer would be to take a note of the bike's registration number and description, a description of the rider, a note of the date, time and location and report it to the Police and encourage your riding mates to back you up and all offer to be witnesses of fact in any prosecution.

Being accidentally illegal by taking the wrong

turning is excusable [who hasn't done that at some time?] but blatant, intentional and unmitigated illegal riding should be prosecuted – no arguments!!

Before this draws howls of protest and accusations of "Judas", just stop and think who is the real Judas, here? Who is causing us all loss of amenity? Who is damaging our reputation? Who is assisting the anti's in their selfish work? Who is ruining our legal pastime? Who is undoing all the good work put in by dedicated members of the TRF? In short, who are the real scumbags?

The local Police force can't police the green lanes and, as no one else is going to, I guess it's down to us; if you get into the situation that Steve described then just drop them in it...!!!

Peter Fancourt
Chairman, Sussex Group

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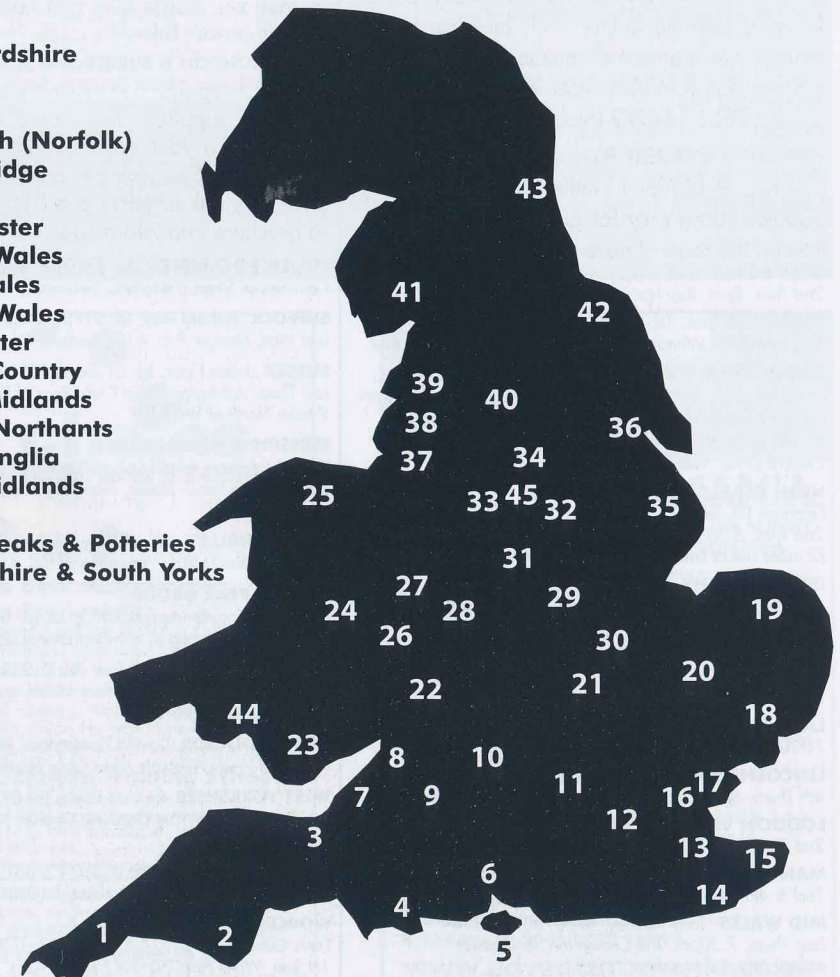
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CAMBRIDGE Tony Lacey, Tel: 07753 820520
1st Thurs, 7.30 p.m., The White Swan, Elsworth Road, Conington, Cambridge CB23 4LN.

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, Bay Horse Inn, Market Weighton, York.

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.

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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, Blydon, 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.

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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 Christian James, Tel: 01446 410073
1st Thurs, 8pm, Ty Nant Inn, Morganstown, Nr Radyr CF15 8LB.

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.






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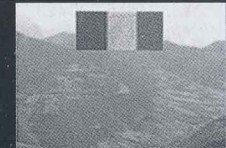


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