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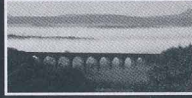
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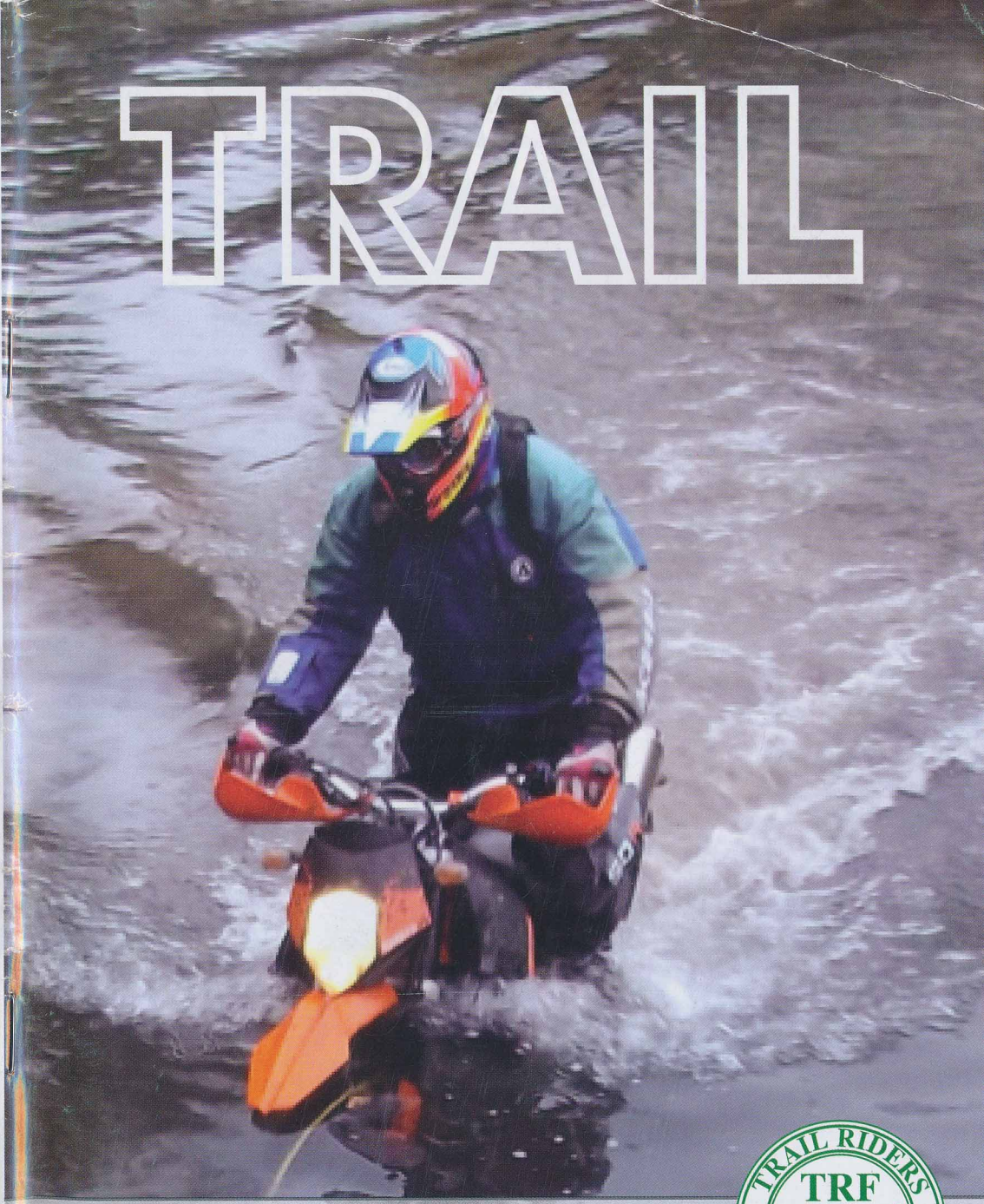
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# TRAIL



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

MARCH 2012 No. 403 EDITOR: FRED ELLISON



Patron: Lord Fairfax

# A FLAWLESS RIDE ON ANY TERRAIN.



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# TRF Executive Meeting

## 22nd April 2012

The next Executive meeting will be held at the Quorn Lodge Hotel in Melton Mowbray: [www.quornlodgehotel.co.uk](http://www.quornlodgehotel.co.uk)

We hope that as many group representative as possible will be there. The meeting will start at 10.00 and should finish around lunchtime or just after.

There are a limited number of rooms available for the Saturday night at £70 for a couple including breakfast. Single rooms are £50. Further accommodation is available at the Sysonby Knoll Hotel just up the road.

There will be a ride out on Saturday on the many challenging, if wet, lanes around Melton. If you are planning to come on this please email me on [marketing@trf.org.uk](mailto:marketing@trf.org.uk) so that we can make sure we have the right number of run leaders.

Why don't you bring your better half? There are many attractions in the area such as Barnsdale Gardens which was the setting for the original BBC Gardener's World, Rutland Water with dinghy and cycle hire available, Burghley and Belton Houses and the historic market towns of Oakham and Stamford.

Jack Knight



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### WANTED:

- RUN REPORTS
- RIGHTS OF WAY • NOTICES
- BIKE & RIDING GEAR REVIEWS
- COVER PHOTOS
- YOUR VIEWS ON TRAIL RIDING RELATED TOPICS
- or anything you feel would be interesting*

**COVER PHOTO:** Glenn Vieira  
*Riding the River Rib*

**COPY DEADLINE:**  
**1st Tuesday of the Month**

All contributions to **THE EDITOR**  
Fred Ellison, Sheepcote Farm,  
Moor Lane, Wiswell, Clitheroe  
BB7 9DG [editor@trf.org.uk](mailto:editor@trf.org.uk)

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## STATIONERY & LEAFLETS

Keepers of Stationery:	<b>Debbie Hutchinson</b>	Leaflets & Membership Forms
	<b>Fred Ellison</b>	Letterheads & Compliments Slips
Display Equipment:	<b>Leo Crone</b>	01325 463815 (7a.m. - 5p.m.) Display boards held at Ut 10, Red Barnes Way, McMullen Road, Darlington DL1 2RR

## REGIONAL RoW ADVISORS

Wales & West Midlands	<b>Tim Stevens</b>	01547 529946 Offa's Road, Knighton LD7 1ES
South & South West	<b>Dave Tilbury</b>	See above for contact details
Eastern	<b>Richard Sugden</b>	01354 651390 home@rlsugden.fsnet.co.uk 122 Station Road, March, Cambridgeshire PE15 8NH
East Midlands	<b>Robin Hickin</b>	See above for contact details

## TRAIL MAGAZINE ADVERTISING

**Display Ads:** For Advertising Rates please contact Fred Ellison, 01254 823893 editor@trf.org.uk  
**Members Classifieds:** Bikes, Riding Gear etc **FREE OF CHARGE** Enclose membership number.  
**ALL Commercial Advertising to be paid for** - £1 per line, £5 minimum. Please send all classifieds with payment if applicable to THE EDITOR, Sheepcote Farm, Moor Lane, Wiswell, Clitheroe BB7 9DG. Tel: 01254 823893 Fax: 01254 887999 editor@trf.org.uk

## NOTICE BOARD

### CAMBRIDGE CHANGE OF VENUE

The Seven Wives, Ramsey Road, St.  
Ives PE27 5RF.  
Next meeting: Thursday 5th April.  
Tony Lacey

### HIGH PEAKS & POTTERIES CHANGE OF DETAILS

New Contact: Steve Hyde,  
Tel: 07931 728956.  
Meeting 1st Thursday,  
The Foaming Quart, 5 Frobisher Street,  
Norton Green, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 8PD.

### CUMBRIA CHANGE OF VENUE

The Bluebell, Heversham - 1 mile north of Milnthorpe on the A6.  
Steve Pighills

### NORTHUMBERLAND & KENT MAPS

Does anyone have any maps showing green lanes I could borrow or copy for either the Northumberland or Kent areas as I am planning a trip at the end of May. This would be much appreciated.

Peter Monk, tel: 07837 907908 or email: pmonk83@yahoo.com

### ROW WORKSHOP

I am running a RoW Workshop for Cambridge TRF on 1st April.  
Venue: Dolphin Hotel, St. Ives. If any members from surrounding groups are interested in coming along then contact:  
Tony Lacey tonylacey2002@btinternet.com to arrange your attendance.

Robin Hickin

# RoW UPDATE

So how's the New Year started for the TRF and our constant ROW issues, well here's where we are up to.

March 1st 2012 and the current exemption on the use of the Gap Road once again courts controversy with BBNPA stopping leisure drivers and riders and making statements like. "When stopped near the top by a park warden who asked them if they should be there, to which they replied yes and he replied they shouldn't be there as it has now been closed". He went on to say "that it would be legally closed in the future and left it at that" make of that what you will when Powys CC are proposing to remove the well observed and legal TRO that is currently in place.

Peak District National Park has approved its new strategy for the management of un-surfaced vehicular routes in the National Park. As someone who attended the Board meeting, I can honestly say there was more discussion as to the title of the strategy than there was as to the content of the report and Strategy itself. Congratulations should go to Local TRF members as well as members of PDVUG and all those who made their views known to the Board, and especially Richard Sugden who shocked the Board by driving all the way from Cambridge to speak at the meeting. Where do they think their 10 million visitors come from? just down the road! Further responses have been made subsequent to the Board meeting and let us hope that those who have to implement the strategy take note of those responses.

The challenge to the Experimental TRO on Chaplegate goes on and as yet no date for a hearing has been given and legal wheels keep turning. As I am sure many of you are aware, objections for the introduction of a Permanent

TRO on this route following the ETRO had to be logged by 29th of February a whole 12 months before any conclusion from the alleged experimental TRO could be drawn. Thanks to all of you who put forward an objection. Hopefully if our legal challenge to the ETRO is successful we will save the PBNPA some time and effort in dealing with all the objections they have received.

Dorset Map Scales continues to drag on and now we await further response from Dorset County Council as to their position and a date for a Court hearing. It would appear to the casual observer of this that there was some great prize to be gained if Dorset CC was to win this case. Local MPs seem to be putting undue influence on the local county politicians and spending significant amounts of council tax payers' money pursuing this case, two police officers worth so far I am lead to believe.

Our friends in the North are engaged in a difference of opinion with North Yorkshire CC who for some reason now believe that all UCR's do not carry vehicular rights. One has to ask what has prompted this view and does it have any justification in fact or in law. It would seem to be that local authorities are lining up to visit the High Court with us. Obviously if they have budgets for court actions they could save themselves time by just sending it as a donation to the TRF instead of going to court on a lost cause. Or better still they could spend it on maintenance of ROW or even improvements to UCR's for the benefit of their council tax payer and the rest of the public.

Any feedback on any of these issues please sent to Robin row@trf.org.uk

Robin Hickin, RoW Officer

# bmf

British Motorcyclists Federation

## Peterborough Showground 19th & 20th May 2012

The TRF will be at the BMF Show again this year. We will have two stands; one in the club village and one just by the main arena.

The setting up and running of the show will be by the Cambridge Group but I am sure they would be happy to get any extra help that they can. Free parking and passes to all volunteers. Camping is allowed in the club village, there are shows and live bands as well as all the usual events taking place throughout the two days. There will be a parade around the arena so bring your bike along and join the show

Please contact: mike@mandktrading.co.uk or marketing@trf.org.uk if you able to give some time.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### Somerset TRF Exmoor Forest Ride Day

Sunday 1st April 2012 See page 28 for more information.

**Devon TRF Teign to Tamar** Saturday 14th - Sunday 15th April 2012. Contact Debbie Hutchinson - 07966 438907 or debbiehutchy@btinternet.com (email preferred) for more information.

**Wessex Wanderer Weekend 2012** Saturday 19th - Sunday 20th May 2012. Email any enquiries to keith.johnston55@hotmail.co.uk

**Bristol TRF Fun Time Trial** Saturday 26th May 2012, 12 noon - 4.30 p.m. For more info contact Dean Allen on 07989 466204, no voice mail please.

### Northumbria TRF Bikes, Bevvies & Banter 2012

2nd & 3rd June. For further info please ring Neil on 07939 038180 or Nic on 07940 133871.

### Teesside & North Yorkshire TRF Forest & Heather Trail Riding Weekend

Friday 3rd - Sunday 5th August 2012. For further information contact Richard 07834 632040 or visit www.nytrf.co.uk

## MAKE SURE YOUR EVENT IS LISTED

Send any details to The Editor editor@trf.org.uk,  
Sheepcote Farm, Moor Lane, Wiswell, Clitheroe, BB7 9DG.

# Hampshire Farmer Cleared of Killing Off Road Biker

The forums have been buzzing with the news that farmer Timothy Wolfe whose actions led to the death a trail rider; Gary Greaves, was acquitted this week (28th February) of manslaughter.

I left a message with the farmer to see if I could get his side of the story but, not surprisingly did not hear from him. Simon Frost, the leader of the group of trail riders, did supply some additional information which did not, so far as I know, appear in the media reports. For those of you who have been living in a box here are the main points of the case as I understand it.

On 30th October 2010 a group of five riders were riding trails around Sunwood Farm, Ditcham, nr Petersfield when they got lost. They had ridden along some tractor tracks along the edge of a stubble field, found the way out blocked by barbed wire and turned back. About a third of the way back they spotted a Land Rover heading rapidly toward them. They accelerated out of the field and onto a tarmac road. Simon alleges that at this point Mr Wolfe; who was driving the vehicle, was doing about 60 miles an hour, 2 bike lengths behind the rear rider. In order to get out of his way, they turned left onto a track leading into Ditcham woods and then a further sharp left. The Land Rover apparently did not make the turn, hitting first the rearmost rider, Andrew Kirkpatrick, who

suffered leg, arm and shoulder injuries, and then Gary Greaves who was catapulted through the air. The Land Rover rolled, trapping Gary under the vehicle. Although the group managed to push the vehicle off him, by the time they had done so, he had suffocated.

Here are a couple of other, you would have thought, pertinent bits of information gleaned from Simon:

Gary Greaves had a crushed femur and dislocated knee and the Land Rover had a clothing/impact mark on the bumper consistent with this as a point of impact.

Mr Wolfe claimed to have been travelling at no more than 20 miles an hour throughout the entire event but his vehicle left significant skid marks as he joined the tarmac road (leading to a school, don't forget) after exiting the field.

It appears that the CPS declined to prosecute under the Road Traffic Act as they considered the incident to have occurred entirely on private land. As a result, the farmer was accused of the charges of the manslaughter of Gary Greaves and causing actual bodily harm to Andrew Kirkpatrick by wanton and furious driving. The Judge had to direct the jury that they had to either convict or acquit Mr Wolfe and that they could not convict on one of the charges and acquit on the other.

One can sympathise with a jury called upon

to make such a black and white choice, either to find him guilty of an appalling crime or acquit him and, as you now know, he was acquitted.

However, the tarmac road to Ditcham Park School, which part of the chase took place on, is public access with correct statutory signage and it would, therefore, have been open to the Judge to direct the jury that they could find Mr Wolfe guilty of the lesser charges under the RTA of either causing death by dangerous driving, dangerous driving or furious driving. If he had been found guilty of any of these lesser charges, there would have been some feeling of justice for the riders and Gary's widow Carol, instead of which there is the understandable outrage that he has been allowed to get off scot free.

The most shocking aspect of the whole incident, if we believe what Simon has said, is that Mr Wolfe failed to assist by getting out of his vehicle or helping to move it or provide a postcode so that the emergency services could easily locate them. Apparently his response was along the lines of 'I don't care; you are on my land.'

By now, you might have already drawn a comparison with that other farmer, Tony Martin, who shot a burglar in the back who was fleeing his property. He was originally jailed for life (although this sentence was later reduced to 10 years on appeal) and you have to wonder how very different this case was. There is the contention that Mr Wolfe had been plagued with illegal riding for years and there is no doubt that the riders were not on a legal trail (but they were leaving), but how can that excuse driving in such a manner that a person who was simply indulging a pastime, albeit in the wrong place, loses his life and the person who, at the very least, made an error of judgement in causing his death, escape entirely unpunished?

Let's be clear about this, these lads are not members of the TRF and we cannot approve of the fact that they set out with little knowledge of where they could legally ride

as the consequences of that attitude are damaging to us all. However, what they did wasn't the worst crime in the world, they weren't damaging any crops and indeed we are told that the vicar, who lives in North Lodge and saw them riding into the field, said at the trial that they were in single file and going at a reasonable speed. How many of us have found ourselves at some time in the past doing, for a variety of reasons, the same thing?

The question is; are you, just because you ride a trail bike, somehow a second class citizen with less rights than the rest of the general public, less even than a burglar? Certainly, if you read Simon Frost's post on the TRF forum, he felt that he and the others were branded as thugs and liars. Carol Greaves posted her response to the acquittal on another forum which was copied across to the TRF forum. Her anguish and passion are, as you would expect, clear for everyone to see and further emphasised the quite natural impression that, just because he was a biker, he was beneath contempt.

Just a thought but can you imagine the outcry if the victim had been riding a horse?

Jack Knight

If you are incensed by this apparent injustice and want to demonstrate your feelings, we are planning a ride out in 5 or 6 different areas of the country perhaps finishing, in each case, at the local Crown Court, one of which will be at Winchester where the case was heard. By the time you read this; details will be on the TRF website and there will be a mechanism to sign up for the ride in your local area.

Let's all make the effort to get our bikes out - we need to send the loudest possible message that this is simply not right!

### **Faced with the same sort of situation what should you do?**

- Slow down and at the earliest opportunity come to a halt, turn off your engine and remove your helmet and goggles.
- If you have a head cam make sure it is running. Be discrete if you only have a stills camera.
- Look friendly and try to engage the person in conversation.
- If you have a map, hold it out and try to ascertain where you are and where you went wrong.
- Apologise for being on the land
- Leave quietly on minimal throttle.
- If you are threatened, remain calm and report the incident to the police. They probably won't do anything for a one-off offence unless someone is actually injured but if there is a pattern it could be significant.

## **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.

**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, handwritten or otherwise.*

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

# **KTM UP THE BUNDOU**



Imagine a land with no NIMBYs, no MOT, registration or restrictions. Decent weather most of the time, unlimited trails and varied terrain with fantastic views. But no national health service, no ambulances, fire and rescue. Where you mostly rely on your own resources if you get into trouble. That's dirt biking in Africa.

I went to live in Kenya. I could forget the gloom and despondency of the UK and look forward to sun filled adventure on the wild continent. Not sure what biking had to offer though. My off road confidence having taken a knock, with a crash on a byway near Salisbury. A broken collar bone, dislocated shoulder and ligament damage had put my off roading on hold. So I was instead looking forward to putting my BMW R1100GS through some heavyweight touring. However I had been warned of the dangers posed from local mini busses (Matatus) and the generally arrogant and stupidly aggressive Kenyan drivers

I had been spending my time off work, trekking and climbing various Kenyan hills and mountains and this experience had prompted me to hatch a little plot. What about selling the GS and bringing out an Enduro bike, I asked the missus. I had been checking out the dirt bike scene and had been told that there was a Moto X track in Nairobi. I had discovered that there was also trail riding in the vicinity in the bush in the Great Rift Valley. I decided to sell the Beemer and to seek a suitable enduro bike.

The boxer sold easily, assisted via a long distance telephone call to give instruction to the missus on starting etc. But now Mrs Wonderful was faced with the daunting prospect of finding and purchasing a 2nd hand enduro bike for me and exporting it to Kenya. I asked her to find an XR400 or 600 or KTM200 or perhaps a KTM620/640 for under two grand. She solved the conundrum by ringing round some dealers. Bracken in SE London sold her on the idea of buying a new old-stock 2002 KTM 200 EXC/GS, a bike that had been on the top of my short list as a possible 2nd hand. But at the price it could be purchased new, tax free. Not only was I looking forward to being joined in Kenya by my family, I had a new toy to play with.

That September my loved one came to Kenya. The wife also arrived. We travelled the Country on the classic "big five" safaris, visiting the Masai Mara and other game parks and sunning ourselves at the coast near to Mombasa. But there was no biking to be had.

There was no TRF to join and with perhaps only 20 or 30 active off roaders in Kenya, seemingly no one to take pity on me and take

me out for some bush bashing.

I signed up for a MotoX training event at Jamhuri, the local track. I had ridden a couple of Moto in the trail bike class, about twenty years before in the UK. I was horrified to find on attending Jamhuri on the first day that the instructor was the Irish National champion and rated high in World ranking. Worse, I was more than twice the age of the next oldest entrant. Most of my fellow riders ranged from nine to nineteen. Unlike everyone else I had a number plate, not race numbers. More embarrassing, I still had indicators fitted to the EXC.

Forty years of fat living soon took their toll. The instructor expected us to run round the track in our boots and gear as a warm up. Nairobi is quite high, at 5700ft and my aching lungs did not take kindly to this punishment.

When the training proper started it got worse. I did not know a berm from my bum. The jumps were like Kilimanjaro (Africa's highest mountain.) One killer had a twelve foot chasm in the middle, land short and it could be your last breath.

The instructor was kind though and spared my blushes as best he was able. Sending me round the junior course to gain confidence. I never got quite brave enough to leap the canyon or to tackle double whoops or get serious air over the pyramid. However I was making the top of the step up, rather than crashing into the up slope. But desperate as I was to get out dirt biking, I realised that MotoX was not for me.

My luck though was soon to change. I spotted an advert on the bike shop's notice board. A guy who wished to find trail riding mates for bush riding. I called the number and found a riding buddy. He had a KTM 360EXC and said that he had little riding experience. He just wanted the chance to go for a Sunday ride, get out in the bush and escape from Nairobi for a few hours. He thought he could find some routes through to the back of the local Ngong hills and down into the Rift valley.

The Ngongs (knuckles in Maasai language) rise several thousand feet, the five peaks dominating Nairobi's Western skyline. There is a circular track on one side, a Murrum (dirt) road, wide but chopped up from vehicles in the rainy season. We thought there were paths we could follow from the Circular track to cut around and up the hills. My mate knew of tracks and paths as far as the circular trail and from there we would play it by ear.

My KTM had been run in and I had jettied it for the altitude resulting in crisp running. The bike not me that is. I packed tools into fender bag. I mounted a touratech GPS mount on the bars to carry my now archaic Garmin 12. I would wear my UK dirt bike clothes. T shirt, UFO mesh breathable body armour and a Moto X shirt. Too many layers I was to learn. But it is ever a trade off between protection and cooling when riding in the heat. Moto X jeans, knee protectors and Alpinestar boots, topped by an AGV, Oakleys and 1.5 litre camelback.

Stiff and unfit, I could barely swing a leg over the seat to kick the 200 over. Riding on the road 8km, on the way out, was a pleasant surprise, good to be cutting through the traffic

again, instead of being stuck in a car whilst Matatus attack from all sides. Even the light rain did not disturb me much, pleasantly cooling the air temperature down to about 20C. The 200 was a typical 2 stroke, not wanting to bibble, either throttle closed, or through the revs. Max attack or stopped, nothing in between.

My mate's EXC360 looked a monster, spitting and belching as it was kicked into life and cacophony of noise, less ring ding than clang clang of two stroke piston echoing in the FMF fatty, like a galvanised rubbish bin full of scrap iron rolling down a hill. My riding mate was more sartorial than me. Wearing boots, helmet, jeans and sweatshirt. Steve McQueen to my teenage monster ninja turtle. I had all the gear and no idea.

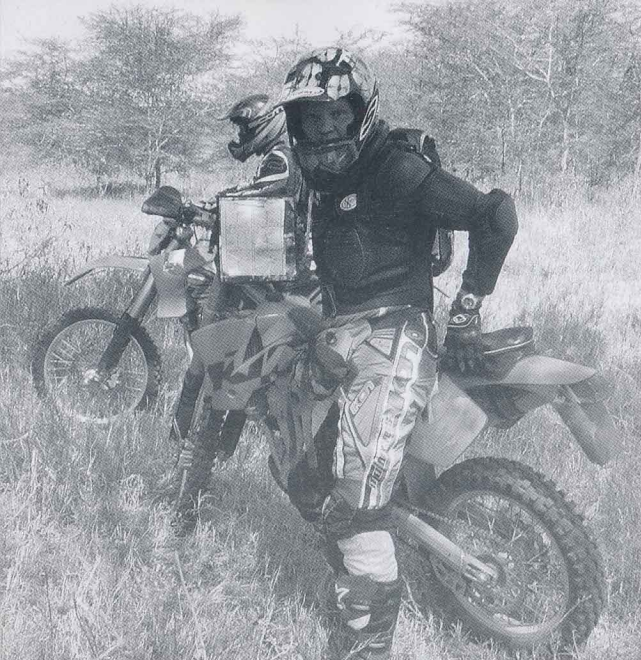
We set off in gentle drizzle on the few hundred metres of tarmac that would be the only black top we rode for the next 100kms or so. Mr McQueen going very gently, warming the bike, standing, swinging the 360 side to side, bike and rider loosening up. We turned off tarmac and onto a narrow, red coloured track and blipped up an off camber ten foot climb onto a grass/dirt field. A football field! The 360 was ahead, across the broken surface. This was not a football field a la UK. A rough dirt field with a set of netless posts, broken by a cattle track through the middle, chopped up by hooves in the mud. And it was very slippery. The 200 typical of the breed, strong pull at the low end, followed by a sudden snap onto the pipe and a shrieking flurry of revs, 2nd, 3rd. Help! Brakes. Phew nearly ran into the back of my leader. Left, steep downhill murrum type road. Broken up by rocks and rivulets of water. The rocky, sandy surface was pale, light, like chalk and on the moderate descent, I found myself freezing up, heart and lungs already pumping, partly panic, partly lack of fitness.

Despite his protestations of inexperience, my mate was setting a cracking pace. I was OK up the hills, standing up, over the front, letting the rear flail about under power but down hills

I was frozen lacking confidence, in low gears on the brakes. We crossed a bridge over a river, the surface of the track made up of pale brick block paving with an inviting camber as the track bent left forming a berm and climbed up hill again across large rock slabs. The local villagers looked perplexed or petrified. Woman washing both clothes and Toto (kids) in the river. Donkeys, goats and skinny cattle were drinking. I slowed right down for two African grooms (scyces) leading horses. They were full of smiles in response to my Jambo, replying "Mzuri, Mzuri." (Fine.)

We went off the main track onto a narrow path through some woodland. In first or just second gear, left, right, never straight. Typical in some ways of European woodland but strangely exotic, acacias and hanging vines not like trees at home. In the UK you would never be allowed to ride a track like this. It would be a footpath only for Janet Shrieking Porter and her bobble hated rambblers. The track climbed and turned, over arid, riven, roots and rocks. Standing up it was fun and just about challenging, the path dog leg between some trees, up and over some loose rock steps, quite steep 20 or so degrees. There was definitely a challenge ahead. My friend cleared the hundred yard obstacle, with dignity intact. I flailed arms and legs, struggling for grip. Out of the woods onto Murrum, through villages, with shack doors behind wire or thorn fences directly onto the path. Totos would appear screaming "Mzungu, Mzungu" (Whitey, Whitey). Usually followed by "give me money." Charming little tinkers.

I was concerned about knocking over a pedestrian, Kid, Adult, Livestock or Dog. Taking a line of maximum safety, theirs not mine, rather than minimum bumps and this was hampering my pace. The locals though were amazingly track wise and the kids were hell bent on running right up to the side of the bike, whatever my speed. Inexperienced as I was, I found all the human attention unnerving.



mans land in the middle. Stretching a mile through a dip and a climb, with vehicles trapped on the slippery hill, inching over obstacles, wheels madly articulated over boulders. My mate shot off, his Ohlins shock damping the hits as he rode through the valley, round car and pick up and up the other side. I followed but more circumspect, still afraid of downhill and struggling to read this wide open track, wet but lit by bright sunlight. I was bouncing from rock to rock, having chosen a bad line, getting crossed up on the feather-light KTM. Friend waited for me at the top, where Murram crossed Tarmac. Matatus were gathered at the crossing. Drivers spaced out on booze or drugs after the Saturday night before. Miraa (chat/khat) or

The rocky, bumpy but wide track was full of Kenyans going about their Sunday business, mostly in their Sunday best. On this day there was little dust, as the overnight rain had let it settle but still I was worried about mud and thrown rocks from our tyres, coating the Mamas in their cerise, violet, yellow or white puffy dresses. Sleeves and shoulders puffed up like concertinas. I was riding in third and fourth gear. The locals though were hardly hostile. Many waving and smiling, particularly the kids. Giving throttle signs or mimicking wheelies as they sometime scampered alongside us. Hardly like the UK where you can end up in a haranguing match with a bumbling NIMBY, misinformed threatening the law, even though you are riding legally.

I was warmed up now, arms pumping over the corrugations, using body English to swing through the easier paths. The pounding on bike and rider was extreme. Unlike soft loamy UK tracks, no give in this red earth. The teeth jarring was extreme and I worried for the strength of even KTM wheels.

The Murram track opened out with two car size paths on either side with 30ft of rock no

boozed up on palm wine. Matatus are the Piranhas of Nairobi roads. Devouring people, hunting in shoals, unpredictable and responsible for thousands of deaths. I waited for clear traffic and followed. The Matatus though chose that moment to attack, pulling out into the traffic stream as soon as they saw my moving vehicle to block.

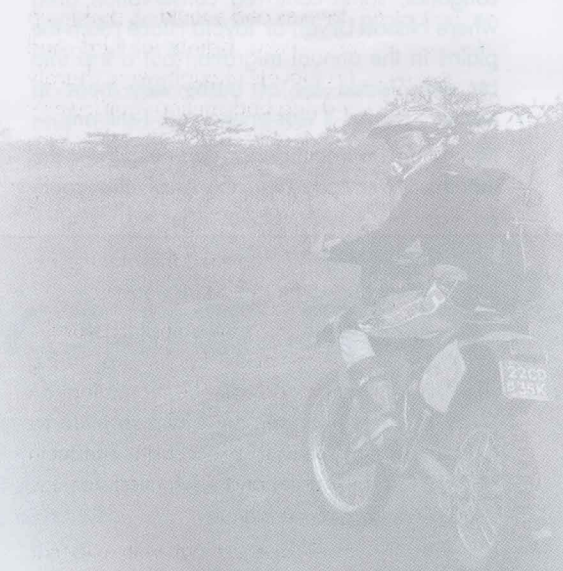
Winding over more rocks, through villages, pausing for breath at Corner Baridi (cold corner) to admire the view down into the rift valley. The road to the Magadi soda lake, wound through the sunlit bush in the distance. The verdant green of the slopes of the Ngongs 1000 feet above us, green from the short rainy season, contrasted with the dun and yellow of the dusty Great Rift Valley, dropping a couple of thousand feet down in the distance. We rode up an easy track on the shoulder of the Ngongs, to climb two of the peaks to admire the view. I was uneasy, having walked this trail, some months before, the breadth of the hills, accompanied by a Kenyan Wildlife Service guard, armed with an assault rifle. He had not been there to guard us against the wildlife, although Buffalo and Leopard are on

the hills, but because of the spate of armed robberies on tourists and residents. I felt suddenly nervous, free of the normal Nairobi security shackles, perched, leaning against the biting wind on the edge of these hills. A mile or so distant, some Maasai herdsman were moving their meagre flocks in our direction. We were both feeling stupidly uneasy, because of robbery tales and decided it was time to move on. It's hard to rob a fast moving Enduro bike.

We rode down the grassy slope, cavorting through dips and hollows. Me, stiff and unsubtle on descents. Brake on, I touched a wet rock, hidden in the long grass and I was off. Rolling over the flailing limbs but no pain and no damage to the 200, apart from the usual grazed plastic brush guard. At least I had converted my virgin new bike. At the bottom, I could tell my mate was less than impressed with my riding. I admitted that years of road bikes, Fireblades, Blackbirds, Daytonas and gentle UK trail riding was no preparation for African off-road. I was having difficulty reading the terrain, the light and colour of the ground changed by the hour as that sharp, Equatorial sun rose. We had been riding at a higher average speed than I had been used to. Wide open spaces allowing us to get it on in fourth, fifth and sixth. My buddy had been in top gear in places, jumping over undulations in the terrain, power sliding round shale strewn bends and throttling through the sandy bits. He admitted that although he lacked recent riding experience, having been brought up in Kenya he had ridden Moto X bikes as a kid. Yeah right, like as schoolboy champion more like.

He knew of a more technical, challenging section. Slower and akin to the terrain I had described in the UK. "We could take that route; it would slow the pace a bit." Down a sharp, loose rock, goat track. Most of the way with insufficient grip to use the brakes to stop. Stones like tennis balls for a surface, with occasional football sized rocks in channels cut by the rains running. I fell once more on the

descent, tripped up by two left feet and lack of fitness, gasping, sweating and swearing as I scrabbled for purchase. The track narrowed to about twelve inches, a boulder intruding, forcing the bike off camber over a wash-off rock bed, a drop on one side a few inches from the edge of the path. The leader rode this clean, feet up. Swishing his big 360 through, with just enough throttle and balance. I went through feet down, with a perilous, heart in mouth moment as I swayed precariously on the edge of the drop, till the God of Dirtbikes and worn muscles allowed me to find traction to move forward. A long wheelspinning, standing up, climb 200 metres up the other side brought us to the relative ease of an open track. Of black cotton. African earth should be red. Leonardo De Caprio said so in Blood Diamond. Black cotton is soil meets teflon, offering little grip to wheels or hooves. Buildings sink into it when it rains. Cunning local property developers will try to disguise black cotton fields by lightly sprinkling red earth over, so that home builders can be fooled. We rode the slippery trail, my mate disappearing into the distance, jumping the yumps and sliding through the channels cut by rain fall before entering Ngong village and so





back towards Nairobi.

In truth my first Kenyan trail ride was mainly on what the locals call roads. Made slightly more treacherous by rain but still I got a sense of adventure, the wide open spaces, vistas and views and usually the arid dryness of the Rift valley never failing to cause me to catch my breath. Even though I may be obsessed with dirt bikes I also enjoyed seeing wildlife when the pace and panic allowed. I saw Dik Dik (dog sized antelope, always in pairs, mate for life, like acacia thickets, can out run a KTM in the bush but not in the open.)

We also stopped to watch comically unconcerned Corrie Bustard, hunting for reptiles in the scrub within feet of us. We saw a troop of baboon scavenging near a village. (Baboon would not bother to out run a KTM, hard as nails, instead they would rip the rider limb from limb.) Views of other wildlife eluded me that trip as the sweat from my brow caused my goggles to mist, the tears swum in my eyes and my gaze was transfixed feet from my front wheel as I became target fixated on the next impending obstacle. But bear in mind that we are not talking about a Safari into a wildlife park here. This was not Longleat meets Longonot, some contrived conservation area where Nissan Urvan or Toyota Hiace roam the plains in the annual migration but a trip into an unprotected bit of bush, very near to Kenya's capital. I was enchanted. I still am.

My riding and confidence improved over the months. We rode variations of the route

described above and this became our regular run but with countless other trails to take it never became boring. I would sometimes join or be joined by others. We found route variations to add spice. Through dried up river beds (luggas.) Sit back throttle, through the corners in a careful choreography of balance, throttle, gear and gas. Well that was not me but how the others rode. With my lack of style I am more likely to come to a flailing halt in a flurry of revs and wheelspin. Thank god for rim locks to stop punctures through tyre creep.

We found rocky climbs and descents to clamber up and down. Avalanches of stones accompanying the bike and rider. Sometimes the bike and rider were the avalanche. The routes in the Rift, to the back of Nairobi are limited only by fuel endurance. Because this is not Surrey, with Shell and Esso and a Tesco for sustenance. This is Africa. Miles and Miles of sod all. Bliss!

Sod all causes other problems. Like finding fuel, water and food. If you want replenishment, then logistics need to be organised. Send a 4 x 4 with fuel, water, food to a GPS point for a mid day break. Or plan the route to intersect with one of the few main roads, where there is a village with a fuel pump. Or ride a succession of clover leaves, starting and finishing in or around Karen/Ngong on the edge of Nairobi.

*To be continued...*

Mark Harding

## THE SILLY TRF'ER

A government warning said that anyone travelling in icy conditions should take a shovel, blankets or a sleeping bag, extra clothing including a duffle coat, scarf, woolly hat and gloves, 24 hr supply of food and drink, de-icer, rock salt, torch, spare batteries, safety triangle, tow rope, petrol can, first aid kit and a set of jump leads... *I looked a right prat on the trail this morning.*

# A SHORT HISTORY OF UNSURFACED VEHICULAR HIGHWAYS IN DERBYSHIRE

*This piece was written as background notes for the Local Access Forum by Dave Giles*

The origins of our public rights of way system go back as far as the middle ages when the King moved his court around the country and therefore had an interest in the state of the highways. From here comes the concept of the 'King's Highway' and the precept 'Once a highway always a highway'. The King devolved the administrative powers of declaring, keeping and maintaining this highway system originally to the Shire Reeve (Sheriff) but this applied only to the Kingdoms of England and Wales as it was before the Union with Scotland.

In time the Sheriff passed these duties on to the Justices and the Courts, who still remain the body empowered to create or close a highway, not the Highway Authority who have the subservient role of asserting and protecting the rights of the citizen to pass and re-pass along the highway (free from obstruction) and for its maintenance Highway Act 1980 or (HA80).

The terms Public Right of Way (PROW) and Highway are largely synonymous and were initially sub divided into footpath, bridleway and carriageways with, respectively, a right of passage on foot, with a horse and with a carriage. This later term is significant for our purposes here as it expanded from horse drawn carriages to incorporate the 'horseless

carriage' or motor vehicle; and it is worthy of note that taxis in London are still regulated as Hackney Carriages. Since the early 20th Century these motor vehicles have had to be registered, and since the 1930s, the drivers have to be licensed and to carry public indemnity insurance.

At roughly the same time (1930s) a movement gathered momentum to record the many common law minor rights of way that criss-crossed the countryside into a more formal record; hence the term 'Definitive Map'. In 1949 Parliament incorporated this into its National Park Act which began the process of identifying about 10% of the countryside of England & Wales for special protection on behalf of the Nation.

Road 'classification', typically designating 'A' and 'B' roads, and those lower down the maintenance scale, dates back to 1919, with the system fully in place nationally by the 1930s. The term 'unclassified road' can be traced back to 1929; these are called uniquely in Derbyshire Non Classified Highways (NCH).

With regard to the compilation of the Definitive Map (circa 1952, in most places), guidance was offered to the Parish Councils to tell the Surveying Authority what it thought the classification of the existing minor routes should be: footpath, bridleway, or carriageway (the latter which was now mostly used for walking or riding). The advice also

said that existing recorded public roads should, in general, be left out of this survey of public paths. For the most part all of this was clear, except for the one category that the Parish Councils began to question: that of the old carriageways that were now little used by general traffic (often due to the later construction of more easy to use Turnpike roads, etc). The advice given was to categorise them as Carriage ways used mostly on foot (CRF) or by horse (CRB) and some Highway Authority records still show this; although most became more commonly known as Roads used as Public Paths) (RUPPs).

The Ordnance Survey Maps following information given by the Department of Transport (DoT) and the HAs began to depict the general status of public rights in the countryside - although it always noted in the legend that their depiction did not guarantee the status shown and that (generally) higher rights might also still exist: encapsulated in the legal term 'Without prejudice to higher rights'. The designation of RUPP however proved to be unsatisfactory and in 1968 the HA were ordered to review the documentary evidence and reclassify them. However, pleading lack of resources, few did so in any significant way (Derbyshire CC left them untouched), together with a quite a number of other tracks and paths which were known to have common law rights but whose status had never been established. With few exceptions the HAs had seldom fulfilled their duty to keep the Definitive Map under constant review.

By 2000 this state of affairs had become unacceptable, not least to the land owners for whom a public right of way across a field affected what could be done with that field: the stock that could be safely put in it, or the obligation to avoid ploughing a byway or reinstate a ploughed footpath or bridleway. Consequentially the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW2000) declared Parliament's

intention to 'freeze' the map within the next 25 years (actually, by 2026).

As a palliative to the very considerable concerns raised by all the user groups as to the practicability of achieving this without extra resources; the Government directed its agency; the Countryside Commission, to initiate the 'Lost Ways Project'. This, in effect only gave administrative guidance as to the type and level of evidence required to accompany a request to the HA: to either acknowledge a previously unrecorded RoW, or to modify an existing one to a different status (almost invariably an 'up-grading' to a higher status). This was useful in as much as it reminded people of the weight that should be attached to evidence. Evidence such as, carriageways recorded on Tithe or Enclosure maps, or Canal and Railway surveyors maps - all of which had considerable weight as they had been presented to, and accepted by, Parliament in the passing of a previous Bill.

Rectification of the DM was through an application by means of the Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) which the HA must acknowledge, record, and investigate to determination.

Vehicle users had been using the old road network since before WWI, indeed Derbyshire in the 1920s was host to no less than three six-day reliability trials for motorcycles, one of which was an international event. All deliberately used the rough unsealed tracks to test the reliability of their machines and all used the highway network as of right. Since then one or more national reliability trials have taken place every year, except in WWII, and they still continue today.

Since WWII the motorcycling group the Trail Riders Fellowship have been pre-eminent in their use and recording of the unsealed vehicular rights in the countryside and, following the CROW Act in this part of the country, approached DCC as the HA with the

suggestion that they might work together to process the 250 plus routes for which the TRF had the requisite documentary evidence for a DMMO application for Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT).

News of this and other examples of how far the HAs had fallen behind in their duty to keep the DM up-to-date resulted in a very considerable lobby to change the law which was achieved by the addition of a Right of Way section into the Natural Environment and Rural Countryside Bill (NERC). This legislation severely regulated the access of motor vehicles, now re-designated for other reasons as Mechanically Propelled Vehicles (MPV), to what remained of the originally unsealed byway network. Furthermore, it back-dated the date (a legal event) at which DMMO applications for Byway were to be eligible to January 2005, and introduced a new category of highway - the Restricted Byway - making this the only possible outcome of any future claim for Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT).

All BOAT claims preceding the newly imposed cut off date could still be processed to determination providing that they were strictly compliant in their application paperwork; the law stating that all DMMO applications must be accompanied by a map to the scale of not less than 1:25,000 and copies must be submitted of all the accruing evidence: maps, DM statements, Magistrate's Quarter Session records, user statements or any other evidence.

The user group applicants had originally been told by the HAs that they would accept as lawful notification merely detailed reference to the evidence they already held in their archives (pleasing the archivists who were concerned about the damage to fragile maps) and removing a severe bottleneck in the procedure and work load on the County Council staff concerned. This was accepted as

compliant at the High Court but the judgement was overturned in the Appeal Court when the eagle eyed barrister for the Winchester Colleges persuaded the judge that the letter of the law must be adhered to and paper evidence and maps submitted. This is what is now commonly known in RoW circles as the Winchester case.

Between them the NERC Act and the Winchester case severely reduced present MPV and future access rights for MPVs over unsealed historical routes in the countryside. NERC did this by making evidence inadmissible after a newly introduced date, which was itself back-dated (an almost unheard of procedure): and with Winchester by insisting on scrupulous adherence to the letter of a much earlier piece of legislation rather than the application of common sense. Not surprisingly this has left the responsible motor vehicle groups more determined than ever to retain what legitimate access still remains to them.

That is not to say that they will eschew voluntary management agreements or participating in maintenance work - they have in the past and they will continue to do so in the future. But one can naturally expect them to strongly resist any further diminution of their access network that they perceive to be without objective basis and therefore unwarranted and unfair.

All that has been written above only scratches the surface of the background to the use of motor vehicles over the historic unsealed highway network of England & Wales, but it hopefully will provide some understanding as to why the application of further management by regulation using Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) needs to be sound if it is to avoid being challenged in the courts, which will be both expense and time consuming for both parties.

David Giles

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# Viking Victory

We recently challenged the closure to ALL vehicles over winter on the 'Viking Way' (Sewston Lane). Due to our efforts the proposed closure will NOT affect motorcycles!  
Having had this section closed two years ago for 18 months this is a result!

Neve Cooke, Lincs TRF

Lincolnshire  
COUNTY COUNCIL

Our ref: BG/TROS1/P1/vikingway/pms040101

Your ref:

CRM no:

04 January 2012

Mr N Cooke  
15 Green Street  
Great Gonerby  
NG31 8LD

Highways West

County Offices, Annexe C

Eastgate, Sleaford

Lincolnshire, NG34 7EB

Tel: 01522 782070

Fax: 01522 553171

Email: Dev\_HT\_SK\_and\_S@lincolnshir

Dear Sir/Madam

DENTON, VIKING WAY – PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF DRIVING ORDER

I refer to previous correspondence on the above matter.

After careful consideration of the large number of comments received from consultees, it has been decided that two minor revisions to this scheme should be proposed.

The changes are to exempt motorcyclists from the Traffic Regulation Order and to change the dates in which the order is in force to the 1st November to the 30th April. This was previously proposed for 1st October to the 31st March.

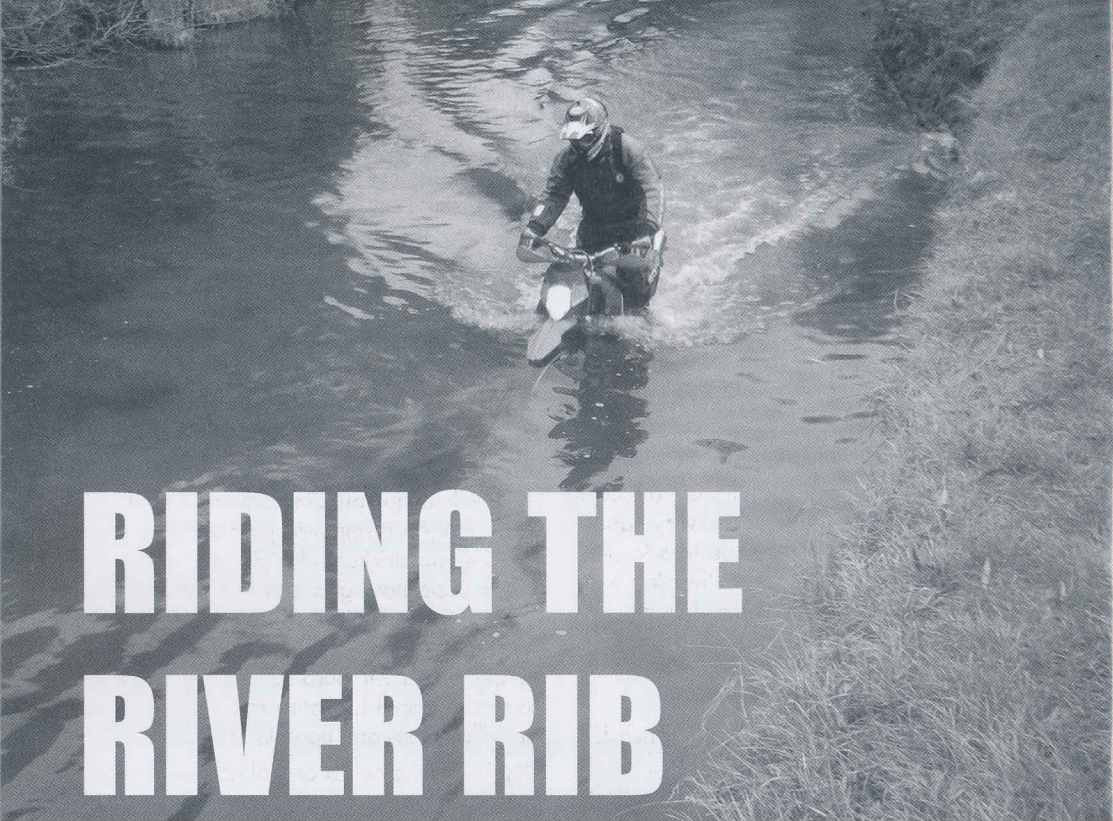
These new proposals take into account the concerns of the majority of comments received from respondents by allowing motorcyclists to use the lane whilst restricting all other motor vehicles.

It was also decided to change the dates slightly as it was felt that these new times are more appropriate to minimise damage when the road is open, that is, during the months when the weather and conditions are drier.

I have enclosed a plan illustrating the revised proposals and I would be pleased to receive any comments you may wish to make on this matter by 1 February 2012. If I do not receive a response by then I will assume that you support the proposal.

Yours faithfully

Mark Heaton  
Area Highways Manager – Grantham



# RIDING THE RIVER RIB

'Anyone up for a ride on Thursday' was the short message that made its way around via text message. By the end of the day we had a group of four eager to ride upon North East Hertfordshires finest Upper Cretaceous layer...well, mud to you and me! The brunt of the lanes being focused around the town of Ware. The weather had been mild for the last few days, hanging around the 10 degree mark with frost free mornings but as usual, the morning of the ride dawned distinctly damp and colder.

As we arrived at Steve's house, it was clear we were all dressed in our full winter regalia of balaclavas, waterproofs and Sealskinz socks and we were confident that we'd remain dry and warm throughout the day. As we made our way to the first lane from Ardeley to Wood End the skies opened up, still happy that we had made the right choice in our attire. As someone once said "There's no such thing as

bad weather - only the wrong clothes". As the rain fell we dispatched the lanes south of Buntingford onto Datchworth and Chapmore End without delay.

The distances travelled between the trails and roads made life a touch tricky, faster road sections chilled you and then the slow lanes roasted you. What we needed was a nice cuppa tea to warm us up, we needed to find a purveyor of a fine brew in the town of Ware, it's called...wait for it; 'Ware to eat'. And with a big sign saying 'muddy boots welcome' how could we refuse. So within seconds of bursting in, we commandeered a table resplendent in our dripping clothes and muddy boots and we were soon guzzling down hot tea and scoffing down rounds of thick cut toast, marvellous!

Somewhat reluctantly we remembered why we were here, paid the bill, a grand total of a

fiver! Something had changed whilst we were inside though, the skies had turned a blue colour and there was a blinding glow from a fiery ball 93 million miles away. Onto Babbs Green, Nether Street, Bishops Stortford and towards Standon with the fine weather still with us, we were all bone dry and skipping along nicely UNTIL the River Rib made an appearance in the form of Standon Ford. To my surprise, without a second delay, Alan on the WR ploughed into the river, water up to his headlight, did a u-turn quicker than a Lib Dem and came straight back out passing me while I was still contemplating what to do! Now there is a reason why he did this. On a recent recce of this route the WR seemed very happy getting its feet wet but always decides to stop when one is feet up in 3 feet of River Rib with boot soaking results every time, leading the rest of us to wonder what WR stands for (answers on a postcard) because Water Resistant it most certainly aint!

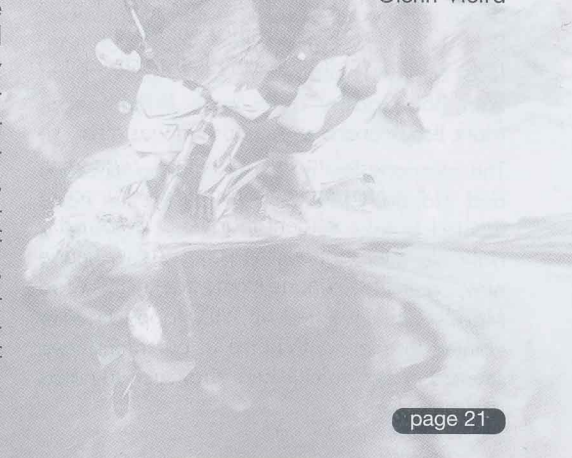
As he parked up on the bank, he reached for his camera and it was down to me and Ian to show the WR that there's nothing to be afraid of. As I was second in line, the task fell on me to continue through the ford so in went the KLX with me blindly holding on. Almost instantly the water was being spluttered away from the already submerged exhaust pipe and I was aiming for the middle of the river hoping I had the line that would lead me out to safety. The exit from the ford is round a corner and hidden by a couple of huge weeping willows, whose tentacles were now trying to grab me as I ventured as close as I dared to the middle of the river. The drag from the water pulled my left foot off the foot peg and with a lucky stab managed to find it again. Now I'm too far in to turn around and still cant see the exit ramp, Alan's finger is poised on the shutter high up on the bank on my left, waiting for his prayers to be answered. Yes, we all know what he was hoping for and with the thought of everyone having a poster print of Kawasaki's new 'U' bike on their garage wall, the front tyre finally emerged from beneath the water and out onto the exit ramp. I leapt off

expecting to see Ian on the 200kg KTM right behind me only to find the surface of the water gently rippling from my passage through but no KTM.

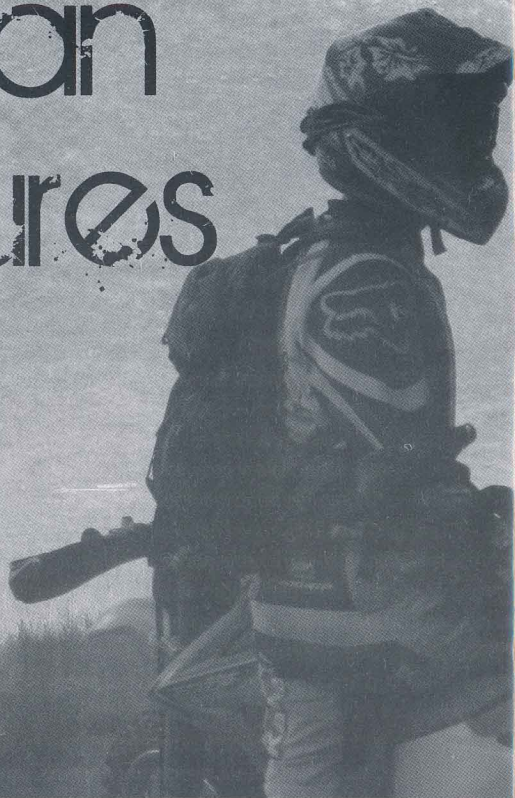
I ran around up onto the bridge to see Ian, now feet down in 3 feet of water, way too far over to the left in the river, the big KTM no longer running...it seems we negated in telling him that the shallowest line (if only by 6 inches) is tight up against the willow trees on the right! All of a sudden the weight of the bike and the cambered river bed below caused the bike to start to tilt over. Under the water went one side of the handlebars and it was at this point I contemplated jumping in from my perch 6 feet above (only contemplated jumping in mind) to help the now stricken rider but with the thought of everyone having a poster print of KTM's new 'U' bike on their garage wall, Ian lifted up the handlebars from beneath the surface and hit the starter...it burred into life, he then hopped up onto his foot pegs and rode past the willow trees and up onto dry land.

Giggling like a bunch of trail riders who knew they'd been lucky, we made our way out to the loop of lanes at Levens Green, onto Wood End and back to our starting point of Ardeley. As we cleaned the bikes down over a cup of tea and a biscuit, Ian emptied his boots and wrung the last bits of the River Rib from his socks. We reflected on an eventful 60 mile ride, oh, and wondered why we had even bothered dressing up to remain warm and dry!

Glenn Vieira



# Romanian Adventures



We had talked for more than a year about going to ride in Romania with Adventuromania who advertise in TBM with the tagline 'Trail Riding Heaven'. Some emails back and forth during January and February last year to confirm numbers and we paid our deposits to secure a week in early September. 8 of us put our names down; Barry Johnson, (East Midlands chairman), Cliff Austen, Ryan Pain, Bob Gadsby, Colin Smith, Brian Knapp, Mark Brock and me.

The company has a fleet of Yamaha WR250s and Honda CRF230s but all of the party wanted to take their own bikes - as usual a right old mixture ranging from Brian's brand new, well 8 hours old KTM 450EXC-F to Mark's well loved CRM 250AR. Bob even wanted to take his WR250 which might have seemed a bit pointless as they already had

plenty over there except it has been specially adapted to his modest inside leg measurement

It was this aspect of the operation that took the most organising with Barry doing pretty well all of the leg work. We arranged to hire a long wheel base Sprinter, calculating that we could get the eight bikes and all the gear in - we were a bit worried about the weight but thought, fingers crossed, that we would just come in under the limit. Colin and Ryan said they were happy to do the driving in exchange for the rest subsidising their holiday. As it turned out a shift change left Colin with no choice but to fly but into his shoes stepped Ian Boddy who now wanted to come, was happy to drive and what's more; Ryan decided to hire a bike so equilibrium was restored: 2 drivers and 8 bikes!

On the Wednesday evening before we met up at our usual monthly meeting venue, the Clock Warehouse in Shardlow, to load the van. We should have warned Joanne the manageress what was going on as a worried looking lad came out to investigate - thinking back it must have looked suspicious with all these guys unloading and loading bikes from one van to another. Reassured by the assurance that we were her usual TRF Group and that we would be in for a beer and a bite to eat in a bit, we finished packing in the bikes, all the riding gear, spares, oils (courtesy of Country Services - providing an excellent horticultural service to both Professional and Domestic Customers since 1994) and tools that we thought we would need. Ian wasn't stopping for a meal and took the van off. The rest of us, including Ryan who had brought his new charming friend Hannah along, went inside for a beer and a meal where, as you can imagine, the talk was all about the trip - Hannah must have been riveted!!

Ian and Ryan set off the following morning, catching the Eurostar freight train before heading across Northern France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary and finally into Romania. Alternating the driving, they thrashed there pretty non-stop except for an enforced stop in Austria where a motorway closure halted them for 5 hours. They made such good time that by Friday afternoon they were already at Timisoara and trying to rendezvous with our host Stephen who had loosely arranged to meet them at the airport where he would be dropping his last group of guests off. In the end they pressed on to Brebu Nou, our base for the week. The Adventuromania website advises 2 1/2 hours transfer time from the airport but it's more like 3 and for Ian and Ryan, who were already feeling bits of chewed string, the potholed, twisting road up the mountains in the dark with only the sketchiest of instructions on how to get there, was almost the final nail in the coffin.

At about the same time as this as we were getting an early flight the following morning, the rest of us were leisurely checking into the

Radisson Hotel, Hemel Hempstead. Incidentally what great value at £35 each for a twin room including free parking for the week for two cars and a gratis minibus ride to the airport in the morning. I guess they made it up later as we each started with £10 into the bar kitty and then chipped in another £20 at the meal table ("We'll need more than that if we are going to have starters" - "No Mark, that's just for the drinks")

The trip to the airport in the morning was livened up by white van man cutting up our taxi and clipping the wing mirror. Pity for him that he was heading for the same drop off point as us. Unfortunately there were no punches thrown but lots of arm waving, shoving and swearing

The passengers on the flight were mostly, it seemed, Romanians going back home including one tough guy with an open neck quartered black and white shirt worn under a shiny black suit - a style that would have looked dodgy in Al Capone's time, never mind in the 21st century. We also noticed a phenomenon that was reinforced during our stay. Romanian women are, almost without exception, young, slim and attractive with a really overtly sexual way of dressing or old,



matronly and short. Where, we wondered throughout the week, were the young mothers and 30/40 year olds? I can't remember who came up with the theory that they were taken into a secure compound as they turned 30 and not let out again until they were old or mad although, if they really let themselves go, they could be let out early for good behaviour. We looked all week for these holding pens but couldn't find them.

The flight landed on time in Timisoara and, with no check in luggage, we were soon out into glorious sun to wait for Stephen Palmer, boss of Adventuromaniam, to arrive. Brian and Cliff, his slightly ginger son, who both lack the protection of a full head of hair, soon had their sun hats on and were moaning about the heat. Fortunately Stephen's minibus had air conditioning (open the windows) although one side was not working (wired shut)

Working our way out of town you could not help but be struck by the poverty and decay all around. There were a few modern buildings; generally foreign car dealerships, DIY stores and hotels but mostly it was a sea of poorly maintained abandoned buildings, dilapidated apartment blocks and run down infrastructure.

We called into a large metro store just out of

town to buy some wine and change some money (Stephen thought that £60 each in currency should cover us for lunches and the odd fuel top up at a garage and he was about right). The main difference from a supermarket over here were the vast catering sized pans that they sold, a freezer cabinet full of whole frozen pigs and a ten metre aisle of nothing but sausages. A selection of savoury and sweet pastries bought at a kiosk outside the supermarket served as lunch which we ate going along.

The wide flat plains south of Timisoara finally gave way to the mountains and we began to climb up past Resita along a winding, intermittently maintained road until finally we joined Ian and Ryan in the village of Brebu Nou.

The house is in a beautiful spot, with fabulous views and we spent a pleasant few hours, the bikes already having been unloaded and put away, just chilling and shaking out the journey.

Stephen had warned us that his Romanian wife who normally looked after the catering had had to go back to Scotland where his daughter was starting school so we would be eating out, the first night at a bar 3 - 4 miles away and thereafter at Enduro Romania who run a similar operation to Stephen's, but without the bike hire, in the same village.

The bar that night was heaving as there was a judo competition taking place and out the back there were three tribute bands, homages to Depeche Mode (good), The Beatles (visually similar) and Guns and Roses (loud apparently) lined up to play on a very professional looking stage. We got a great sense of the way Romanian society works as we were asked to move tables by a tearful and shaking waitress because the local Mr Big wanted the one we were sitting at for his very large and obviously very important guests.

Later on, I tried to talk to an earnest young guy who was there from Radio Resita. Unfortunately the expletive filled language of our interpreter, a groupy with the Guns and Roses band, who had spent the evening while

he was waiting for them to come on getting smashed at the bar, probably ensured that the radio interview that we did was unlikely to be broadcast so Romania is still ignorant about the good work the TRF is doing in the UK!!

Most of us had had enough by midnight and made our way back to the house so were spared Axl Rose's doppelganger strutting his stuff in a leather budgie smuggling pouch which clearly made a big impression on those fortunate enough to witness it

The following morning was clear and already hot by 9.00. My bike had mysteriously acquired new front and rear tyres during the night, my part worn, well alright then completely wrecked ones, not being thought up to the job (can I just say reluctantly, that you were quite right lads).

What an eye opener those first trails were. They started 100 metres from the house straight on to the flowing wide open tracks. Colin was the first to go down, blaming the dust for unsighting him. A couple of minutes in Stephen stopped the group and said there was a choice of routes. He was going left, crabbing across the hill before a steep climb up to the top. If you didn't want to do that the alternative (easy route) was straight ahead. Gulp - it was longer and steeper than anything I had done in the UK. Fortunately there were two other 'pussies' who decided to ease themselves in gently so I was spared the embarrassment of being the only one to wimp out. A short while later we went into the woods, steep climbs and descents, washed out gullies, peppered with logs and boulders, detours to avoid fallen trees, flick flacking through the standing trees always at a fast pace with very little time to rest - exhilarating, and at another level from anything that we know as trail riding in the UK. Unfortunately the day did not end well for our glorious leader, Steve, as Ian misjudged a stop at the top of a particularly steep climb and ran into



the back of his leg. It appeared very serious as he writhed on the ground, like a big Jessie, swearing and wailing piteously that he had a very high pain threshold and that his leg was certainly broken. Fortunately we had some strong pain killers and he was later able to gingerly ride down to the bottom to await an ambulance. Two visits to hospital later confirmed that there was, in fact, no break and a couple days later he was able to ride again although he did remember to limp if he saw anyone watching!

Trail riding heaven certainly describes that part of Romania, particularly for the competent rider. Stephen is bike fit and an enormously accomplished rider as are Sven and Christian the two other guides we had and they know the area like the back of their hands. Stephen seems particularly good at tailoring the riding to the skills of the group. He flattered us that we were all good riders (yeah, yeah, I bet you say that everyone!) so, whilst there are obviously areas suitable for beginners, generally the riding was fast and the trails testing. There is fantastic variety; tight and wooded, fast and open, sandy, muddy and slippery, rocky, steep, narrow and winding, wide and straight. Everyone had

their own ideas on which was the best day but we all agreed that we have never ridden such wonderful trails.

There were no gates to speak of (we saw two in the week), no stops at main roads (as in the UK) and the trails went on and on which did mean that, although the riding abilities of the group were not that widely different, you could become a bit spaced out. For those of us at the back, normally there because we were a bit slower, it often meant riding at or in some cases beyond your abilities just to keep up. This was a relatively minor niggle and it's fair to say that things improved later in the week after we had made the point. That said; it would be a mistake to make up a party either of beginners or a group of mixed ability as these issues could become significant.

The majority of the group had mousers, Mark and I being the only exception amongst those who had brought their own bikes and we had fitted super heavy duty tubes so we weren't expecting too many hold ups through punctures. (Mark did get one puncture but that was from a 4" nail so he is sort of excused that). One slight niggle was that Stephen purchases a brand of Romanian tube made from rubber that Virgin deem too flimsy for its condoms and so Ryan, on his hire bike, had two punctures, one of which took 4 goes to mend as we kept on pinching it and re-puncturing it - there could be considerable time lost if everyone was on them!

The downside of taking your own bikes, apart from the drag for the drivers of 2 x 1500 mile journeys is the fact that, as we loaded the bikes up on Thursday evening so that they could be back in the UK by the weekend and the flight back was not till Saturday, we had a full day to kill on Friday which could have been a bit of a pain. In fact it proved to be a smashing day.

We stopped at the railway engine museum in Resita where they used to be made and Cliff got told off for climbing on the exhibits by the gun wielding curator - probably made her day. Next stop was a vineyard and although we couldn't have a look around (needed to be

## AWARDS

Engineering award: Barry Johnson for gearing his bike down before the holiday by putting a smaller back sprocket on (oops) and then rescuing the situation by making a sprocket that didn't fit, fit using only a round file.

booked in advance) we managed to put away 4kgs of grapes between the 7 of us, relaxing in the sun and admiring the view. (This all proved a bit too much for Mark's temperamental bowels which had been playing up all week as the check in at the Hotel Stelitia (clean and comfortable) later had to be rushed through - you'll be pleased to know that he made it, pale and sweating, to the bathroom in the nick of time).

We took a taxi into Timisoara and made a brief visit to the church of Laszlo Tokes - he was the dissident priest whose attempted expulsion is generally held to have triggered the revolution that overthrew Ceausescu - before retiring to a café alongside the river Bega to have a few drinks in the sun, watching lovers and friends glide by on pedalos. Despite a counter proposal to go for a KFC we managed to finish off the evening with a decent meal in the Restaurant Casa de Flores where a 3 course meal and drinks came to less than £15 each. It was really a great and unexpectedly enjoyable end to the holiday.

If there was one criticism of the trip it was all the little extras that mounted up - not huge amounts by any means but, as Brian (wise old owl that he is) remarked, "it's not the £1000 that narks it is the extra £20". I guess you can't fight nature (Stephen's Caledonian roots, that is) but wouldn't you think that the transfer from the airport should be included? It wasn't expensive at all, only £15 each for the return journey but why exclude it from the overall cost of the holiday? Also, it is perfectly

reasonable to charge for beer but, as it isn't recommended to drink the tap water, it's a bit cheeky to charge for bottled water. There is also apparently a license that costs 20 Euros that one should purchase to legitimately ride in the area. There were certainly some strong hints (not picked up though!) that we should pay extra for this sticker which, if it was required, should have been included as it was clearly fundamental to what we had specifically come on the holiday to do. Finally, we had the frustration and expense of paying 10 each at the airport as we could not check in on line because there was no printer at the house. As I say, nothing very serious or expensive, it was just a bit daft and a lost opportunity to send everyone home totally satisfied.

Anyway putting those niggles aside, to sum up; I can't remember where we went but it wasn't important. The memory of those fantastic trails seamlessly flowing into each other, the warm smiles and waves from almost every Romanian that we passed and the company of good friends will be remembered for a long time. If I can get my pass signed again another year I will certainly be back.

Jack Knight

### It wasn't a cheap holiday with total costs per person of around £1200 as follows:

Deposit	£50
Flight	£161
Tunnel	£37
Van Hire	£96
Money for toll, fuel etc	£100
Overnight accommodation, meal and drinks	£90
Transfer to and from airport in Romania	£15
Balance of holiday payable on arrival	£520
Wine, currency for lunches and fuel	£60
Bar Bill	£17
Fuel supplied by Stephen	£25
Taxi back to hotel	£3
Contributions to fuel in UK	£10
Tips	£10
Hotel in Timisoara	£12
Meal (excl contributions from Stephen)	£5

Ed: This article was written a few months ago but was held over as there was insufficient space until now.

# TRF LEAFLETS & DISPENSERS

available from  
**Debbie Hutchinson,**  
**Membership Secretary**

TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP  
**Caring  
 for green  
 lanes**

**8 GOOD REASONS**

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

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**CODE OF CONDUCT**

**USE ONLY VEHICULAR RIGHTS OF WAY**  
 It 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**  
 Wholesome drainage, crops and grass. Strayings 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, slow and avoid all obstacles.

**FASTEN GATES TO SAFEGUARD STOCK**  
 Those tied open for farming purposes. Do not give them a chance to stray, endangering themselves, crops and traffic.

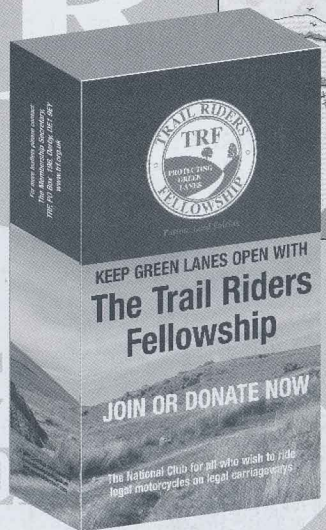
**TRAVEL AT A SAFE SPEED**  
 Note of a reasonable speed, taking regard of conditions and visibility. This should not exceed the voluntary maximum of 20mph.

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



Letterheads and Compliment Slips for all external correspondence available to all Group Officers from  
**Fred Ellison, Editor, 01254 823893, editor@trf.org.uk**

(Membership number required)

## MEMBERS CLASSIFIEDS

**WANTED** Honda CRF250X 2005 to 2008 preferred but anything considered. Please contact Nick on 07815 668098 (Devon).

## ACCOMMODATION

**GAS GAS PAMPERA** 250 cc Mark 3 51 Plate. Tax & Test to November 2012. £1,500 ono. Tel: 01538 300343 (North Staffs).

**DRZ400E** 05 reg, 3000 miles. Lots of extras. Lowered, quiet exhaust. Chain, sprockets, etc. Suspension. Fully serviced, 12 months tax & MOT. Best bike owned. £2000. Steve 07958 368097 (Liverpool).

**GAS GAS PAMPERA 250** 2002 V.g.c. Used for trail riding & road trials and has been excellent, but old age is kicking in & have to revert to 4 wheels! Properly maintained & with lots of spares. MOT & RFT until end March 2013. Sold with T5 TRF number plate (one the same sold on Ebay for £1,372 but would prefer it to go to a TRF member). So give me £1,250 for it! Tony Stuart, Cornwall Group, 01208 881128 or tonystuart944@btinternet.com

**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.placeto stay windermere.co.uk

**HOLIDAY LODGES IN MID WALES** (owned by member). Ideally suited for motorcycle enthusiasts. Large site with safe, secure hard standing for bikes and trailers. Utility/boot room in all, fully equipped workshops for those essential repairs. Self catering or provision for grocery supplies and home cooked meals delivered to your door. Excellent rates for TRF members. See our website: www.radnor-revivals.co.uk or telephone 01597 840308 for a brochure and information.

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## DISPLAY ADVERTISING

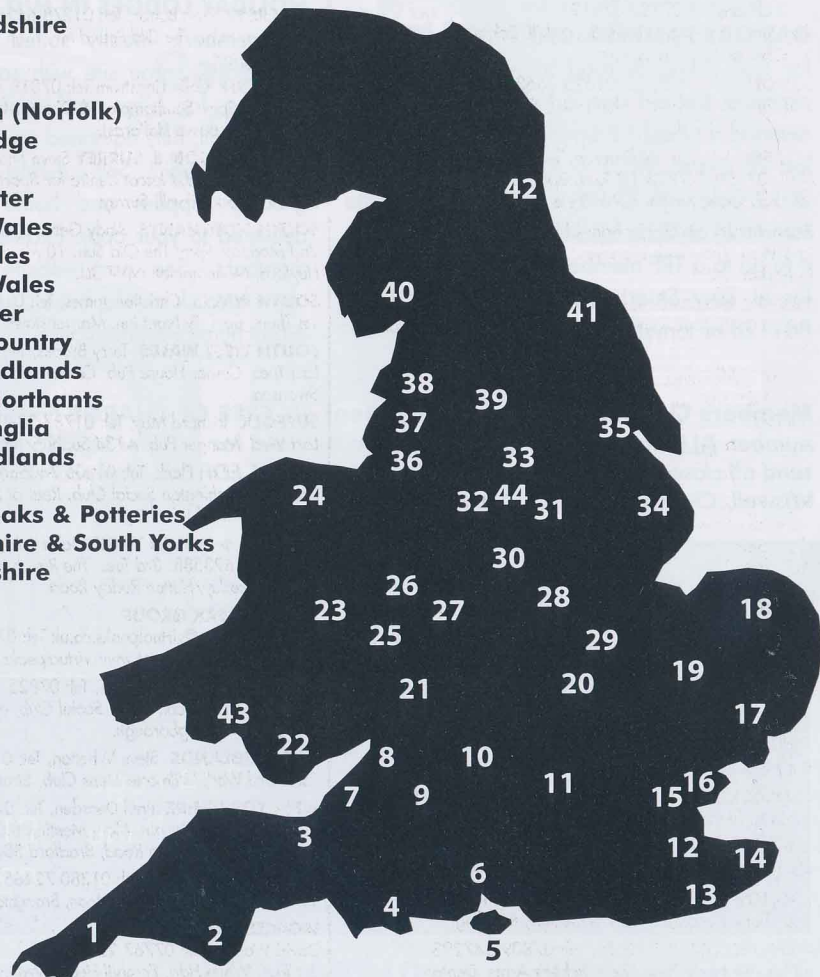
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1/2 Page £66	1/2 Page £132
Full Page £110	Full Page £248

Contact Fred Ellison on **01254 823893** editor@trf.org.uk



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## GROUPS

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

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

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

**CAMBRIDGE** Tony Lacey, Tel: 07753 820520 1st Thurs, 8.00 p.m., The Seven Wives, Ramsey Road, St. Ives PE27 5RF.

**CORNWALL** Adam Hedley, Tel: 01579 349217 3rd Thurs, 7.30 - 8.00 p.m., The Borough Arms, Bodmin.

**CUMBRIA & CRAVEN** Roger Harris, Tel: 01539 725198 2nd Tues, 7.30pm, The Bluebell, Heversham - 1 mile N of Milnthorpe on the A6.

**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 DT11 9AZ.

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

**EAST YORKSHIRE** Simon Garthwaite, Tel: 07980 680026 2nd Tues, 8pm, Londesborough Arms, Market Weighton, York.

**ESSEX** Cliff Eaves, Tel: 07515 330423 2nd Wed, The Cross Keys, The Green, Hatfield Peverel, Essex CM3 2JQ.

**GLOUCESTER** James Osborne, Tel: 01531 822728 1st Wed, 8pm, Wagonworks Club, Tuffley Ave., Gloucester.

**HERTFORDSHIRE** Ken Marshall, Tel: 01438 312602, marshall.k@sky.com 2nd Wed, 8.30pm, Shire Park Social Club, Shire Park, Central Drive, Welwyn Garden City AL7 1AB.

**HIGH PEAK & POTTERIES** Steve Hyde Tel: 07931 728956. 1st Thurs, 8.30 - 9.00pm, The Foaming Quart, 5 Frobisher St., Norton Green, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 8PD.

**ISLE OF WIGHT** 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** Tony Davenport, Tel: 07538 195212 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: 01189 333380 2nd Thurs, Inn on the Park, Woodley, Reading.

**MANCHESTER** Phil Kinder, Tel: 07809 647293 2nd & 4th Mon, 9pm, The Fletcher's Arms, Denton.

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

**NORTHUMBRIA** Nic Gilbert, Tel: 07940 133871 1st Wed, 8pm, The Staffs Club, Blaydon, NE21 4JB.

**NORTH WALES** Neil "Timpo" Thompson, Tel: 07980 555874 1st Wed, 8pm, Potters Wheel, Precinct Way, Buckley CH7 2EG. Ref SJ 279637.

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

**OXFORDSHIRE** Steve Pickford, Tel: 01865 463626 steve.pickford@gmx.net 3rd Thurs, 8pm, The Gladiator Sport & Social Club, 263 Ifley Road, Oxford, OX4 1SJ, next to Ridgeway VW Garage.

**PEAK DISTRICT** Alan Gilmore, Tel: 01332 553246 1st Thurs, 8pm, The Joiner's Arms, Church Road, Quarndon, Derby.

**RIBBLE VALLEY** Peter Ashurst, Tel: 07817 928329 2nd Tues, 8.30pm, Brown Cow, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59).

**SOMERSET** Fran Bunce, Tel: 01278 662605 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** Andy Gerrard, Tel: 07803 600571 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** Terry Brooks, Tel: 07910 050001 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** John Robinson, Tel: 01287 623588. 3rd Tues, The Ranch House, Thoraldby Farm, Stokesley/Hutton Rudby Road.

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

**WEST ANGLIA** Mark Jones, Tel: 07825 142511 1st & 3rd Thurs, Scott Bader Social Club, opp. Parish Church, Wollaston, Wellingborough.

**WEST MIDLANDS** Steve Whetton, Tel: 01527 451089 1st & 3rd Wed, Wilmcote Mens Club, Stratford on Avon.

**WEST YORKSHIRE** Paul Dearden, Tel: 07901 381629 1st Thurs RoW 7.30 pm, Main Meeting 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 SN12 8LX.

**WORCESTERSHIRE** David Walters, Tel: 07767 204730 1st Tues, White Hart, Fernhill Heath, Worcs.



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Protecting Green Lanes Mug available in White, Green, Black or Grey	£ 3.95			
Preserving our Right to Ride Mug available in White, Green, Black or Grey	£ 4.25			
Trail Riders Fellowship Mug in White, Green, Black or Grey	£ 3.95			
TRF Branded Stainless Steel Travel Mug	£ 4.25			
TRF Torpedo Pen*	£ 1.25			
TRF Wind Up Torch Keyring*	£ 3.85			
TRF Ribbon Keyring *	£ 1.50			
TRF Internal Window Sticker (12 x 5 on clear background)*	£ 3.75			
TRF Internal Window Sticker (24 x 2 on clear background)*	£ 4.45			
TRF External Sticker (30 x 2 on white background)*	£ 4.95			
TRF 2011 Sticker*	£ 1.00			
TRF 2010 Sticker*	£ 1.00			
TRF 2009 Sticker*	£ 1.00			
TRF 2008 Sticker*	£ 1.00			
TRF 2007 Sticker*	£ 1.00			
TRF 2006 Sticker*	£ 1.00			
TRF 2005 Sticker*	£ 1.00			
TRF Standard Polo shirt - Green in M, L or XL	£ 14.50			
TRF Standard Polo shirt - Grey in M, L or XL	£ 14.50			

Items marked with a\* already include postage and packaging

Postal Charges: 1 item £2.50, 2 items £3.50, 3 items £5.00, 4 items £6.50, 5+ items £7.00

Or let me know beforehand and I can bring along to the monthly meeting or event.

Goods

P&P

Total value of Order

Name:	Payment Details
Delivery Address:	I enclose a chq to the value of:
	Please make chq's payable to the TRF
	I wish to make payment with a credit/debit card
	Name on Card:
	Card Number:
Membership Number:	Expiry Date:
Contact Number:	Sec Code:
Email Address:	Total to be debited:

Profits from each sale go towards the TRF Fighting Fund

www.trf.org.uk/shop

## TRF SHOP

Remember to pay a visit to the TRF shop at [www.trf.org.uk/shop](http://www.trf.org.uk/shop)

where you will find a selection of:

Embroidered polo shirts available in green or grey from small to XXLarge, an assortment of mugs in a variety of designs in either black, green, white or grey along with pens, stickers, key-rings and travel mugs along with other items.

All profits from each sale go towards the TRF Fighting Fund. Don't forget to check the website for offers and discounts.

For bulk enquiries or orders, please contact [shop@trf.org.uk](mailto:shop@trf.org.uk)

Happy Shopping!



## TRAIL ADVENTURES

Trail Bike Events in 2012:

Dordogne Valley 24th-27th June

Pyrenees 9th-12th September

[www.trail-adventures.com](http://www.trail-adventures.com)

Tel 0871 717 9083 (from the UK)  
or +33 593 501 239

