

TRAIL RIDERS FELLOWSHIP

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



South West regional chairman, Peter Banks on the hotline to County Hall!

SHARING

November 1989

By the time you read this our AGM will have occurred and we will be digesting the implications of the Winchester Conference. I wonder what new priorities either of these will place upon us?

Whatever, this month I would like to share something of the pleasure I have gained from two rides I made, one in Wiltshire the other in Leicestershire; both explorations in conjunction with our ROW survey.

On the first occasion we started on the Ridgeway, south of the A4, and rode southward towards the Vale of Pewsey. There were just two of us, Richard Tallon and myself, two old crocks together, this being our first joint venture since I broke my leg and he bust his collar bone. The rain eased to a drizzle, but it succeeded in making the chalk / clay mixture pretty slippery. We passed four mountain bikes with clogged forks and stopped to pass the time with them. They were heading for Salisbury - if they could get the wheels to go around - and were looking rather wishfully at our "superior" mode of transport. We moved on before they could mug us!

In all, we surveyed nine lanes in a long morning and met no-one else on the trail. We didn't find it at all onerous and it led to our discovering some super 'new' lanes for future runs. And 4 miles south of the A4 where the Ridgeway stops being a Countryside Commission "National Trail", it's blocked with barbed wire. How about that then C.C.?

Cont...

In Melton Mowbray cattle market, a group of lads on the ACU training scheme are riding in and out of the bollards as we unload our bikes to survey the 100 square kilometre survey section of map 129. Richard Marshall saunters over to one lad who is struggling around, oblivious of a flat rear tyre and acquaints him of the disadvantages of riding a motorcycle in this condition; the lad seems quite upset. He should have stuck around, we were back giving a free puncture repair demo one hour later having picked up a needle-like thorn on an overgrown lane.

Richard is very good at map reading and with a marked-up map we make rhythmic progress through the inevitable gates. Again, we see no-one apart from a lady exercising a hunter on a country road. We stop and she passes the time of day with us. Again we find lanes ploughed out or very seldom used and a first-class network that neither of us had used before.

For me, both of these rides had great pleasure; I enjoyed the company, we had our 'moments' and a good few laughs, England was ours alone except for when we had to use the major roads. It was an adventure and we were the explorers. Have you heard about that special pub at Burrough on the Hill which sells the most mind-blowing beer, well

I'm still discovering this 'green and pleasant land', how about you?

Dave Giles
National Chairman

DYFI VENTURE II

ADRIAN WALLS

(Dyfed Group)

Named after a 2 day run organised by 'the chaps' namely Pete Smith and Bert Metcalf in the early 70's for the North Wales Green Lane Riders the fore runner of this group. It fell into history in the late 70's.

Having decided to give it a new lease of life, we decided to start from Dolyellow, rather than Machynlleth, and do as many of those little roads one never has time to do. The weekend was to be May Day Bank Holiday weekend.

Due to work or Family commitments only 5 were able to turn up. Starting at Dolyellow were John Mills (XL 185), Dave Eaton (XR 200) (1988 vintage), Frank Kershaw (PE 175), and myself (KMX 125), Mike Stoddard (XR 200) joined us later at lunch time. Leaving the centre of town, we started immediately on a well used track that started by doing a serious impression of a pavement, complete with kerb. We then crossed through the forestry along a lively little track crossing Tir Stent, then travelling across towards Brithdir did a few small ones.

The weather was wonderful. We started on the old road to Bwlch Oerddrws, up the rocky steps, trying to avoid the stubborn Welsh Blacks, we then turned to cross the track, which is now well used by tractors. Down on the old roman road which is a wonderful track with 2 old stone bridges. Entering the forestry, a new fence has been erected, which some-one has torn down, and the track is made more difficult by recent thinning. Coming out of the wood we met the farmer on a Kawasaki ATU, a chap who seemed to know a lot about trails, mentioning that the previous week a group of riders had been through.

Next crossing the A494 we tried a few new VCR's and headed up the tarmac road to Rhobell Faur, and turning back, to follow a marvellous old favourite that had grand views back to Dolgellow, and some interesting agricultural and industrial relics. A few more old tracks around Llan Fudreth and it was time for lunch in Dogellow, where we met Mike.

In the afternoon John led for a new route, which followed a stone road up the slopes of Diffwys and Yflethr, to view most impressive mine workings. We then followed a VCR which in places resembled a sheep track, over ditches, bogs, and cross cambers for a couple of miles, then entering forestry where the track was paved in places, and in others covered with windblow, where due to John and Dave having spent time over the weeks tracing the route we were able to follow it. We then headed back to Dolgellow, where we loaded up and headed back to the farms we had booked

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accommodation at. (NB. the Welsh Tourist Board produced an excellent free guide to Welsh Farm Holidays.) One farm in this guide owns half of Cader Idris, unfortunately they were booked up but recommended a place up the road "Cyjannedd Vchaf" at the foot of the Fordd Du, overlooking the Manuddach estuary, run by a Mr and Mrs Tovey who let us leave our cars and trailers behind on Sunday phone 0341 250526 (05 REF 635127).

On a wet Sunday morning, we were in such a nice place I decided to have a trail run back to Dolgellow to meet Dave and John, we arrived half an hour late (sorry!). Heading North again into the Coed y Brenim, the first road we were looking for was tarmac, the next was planted over. Nipping down a forest road, we rejoined it and descended to the old gold mine workings to view the Cain and Manuddach Falls, a marvellous sight, although nearly equal quantities of rain were coming from the skies, heading downstream on the east bank, we soon arrived at the ????? 50-60 yards wide, covered with Boulders and by now deep water dropping into a deep hole, and then emerging wheel deep to emerge wet on the other side, with legs flailing for stability. I made it following Frank, we all crossed in some form of style, stopping to drain our boots on dry land. Heading West to join the old Roman road, we headed North, with the only problem some wind blow and a road filled with Beech saplings it took us half an hour to get 150 yards.

Most of the road in the forest is pure forest stone road, but emerging on the open land it is a grassy track with cut rock in places. Driving rain and low cloud made for less than spectacular views. Dropping down to the 'Dry Ski' resort at Thyd Broch, we headed to Trawsfynydd for lunch, which amazingly had no rain, we went to the first pub, as it had a real tough look and had an XR 200 with 'L' Plates parked outside. We had two large plates of cheese and ham sandwiches, whilst ducking the death ray glances of the locals. Traws has 2 pubs, the other does bar meals, has real ale and looks like its not too proud of who crosses its doorsteps.

Feeling better we tried a VCR to find it quite blocked by slate slabs, so well embedded, they had been there for years so from Pant Islyn we followed an interesting technical track with a very difficult uphill bog, leading up to Tomen y Mur and the Roman Amphitheatre. Here we met the farmer sat on the ground, awaiting our arrival. Stopping us he wanted to know what we were up to, so showing him the map and our intentions to follow the old road, he said he had presumed we were local lads who were illegally riding on his land. We spent over half an hour chatting to him, he told us all about the use of the old road we had just been on and how recently it had been used by farmers. We discussed Chernobyl and Trawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station, and left him promising to call in next time we were passing.

We then headed South over a vague track that was a magnificent run, dropping onto the A4212, and then taking the minor road to Cwynfynydd and then took to a road past the Radar and laser protected coal mine officers, down a ***** steep hill back to the waterfalls. As it had been raining since we had left the old farmer, a sudden inspiring thought came to me - lets do the Ford again. Sending Frank across first with my camera, I've got a great photo of me stalled in the middle of the river, Mike following John developed a drastic list, suddenly plop and Mikes XR was no more to be seen. It would probably have been easier to dredge it up, but we waded in, and as it wouldn't start we pulled it out. Dave, obviously distracted by all of this, started to drift downstream, only stopping on a conveniently placed large boulder, and managed to ride out safely. After draining the XR, it started and ran like a power washer. Now very wet and cold, a quick retreat was made to Dolyellow, where, after a cup of coffee we said goodbye to John and Dave at 6.00 pm and rode back to collect the cars, along the way the sun came out, a sudden flash of inspiration struck me, lets do the Fflrdd Ddu, I expected to take an hour, but that is almost another story, we arrived at the farm at 9.00, where we changed in the garage, and sat down in the lounge before a roaring fire, drinking a much needed cup of coffee.

The Greens Next Door

J. Coulson,

(East Midland Group)

The people working next door are virtually all anti-trail rider, mostly for 'green' reasons. One in particular because he likes to have complete peace and quiet whilst walking in the Derbyshire hills.

It's interesting that these so called 'green' conservationist types (and I'm talking about fellows that work on a wildfowl reserve) all burn petrol to get to work! Why, when all but one live within three miles, don't they walk or cycle? These are all intelligent, well educated folk, but tunnel vision sets in when green laning is mentioned, all they can see is a noisy, fast and dangerous motorcylce being ridden by a living brain donor. My sympathy goes out to anyone who has encountered such people. I know they exist and they make my blood boil.

Back to the people next door. I believe they are typical of "antis". They can't see that ramblers boots, horses' hooves and water etc. cause erosion to trail surfaces, probably far more so than responsibly-ridden motorcycles. They can't accept that modern machines aren't noisy; they do not believe that modern trail machines don't scare wildlife, I've often been within a few feet of deer and birds of prey etc., and they rarely startle. Try that on foot! But these people do back down on the exhaust pollution argument, when you point out that 98% of ramblers have driven to the hills.

Why can't they just live and let live?

Letters

Well done on stepping in to produce a newsletter. A most important part of our organisation I think.

I haven't seen the A.G.M. Agenda, but I hope there will be votes of thanks for John Higgin and Brian Thompson, despite ups and downs with Brian! They have both done much to keep the TRF moving in the right direction and maintain us as a respected organisation.

It would be cavalier if they were not appreciated.

Best Wishes.

David Edgar
Cambridgeshire TRF Group
R.O.W.O.

Quite agree, David. Hope you will attend the A.G.M. to propose the vote personally.

Ed.

I hope you receive more articles, as I find the bulletin very good reading. For me as a relative new-comer to trail riding, I would like more technical information, details of modifications and reports on various bikes.

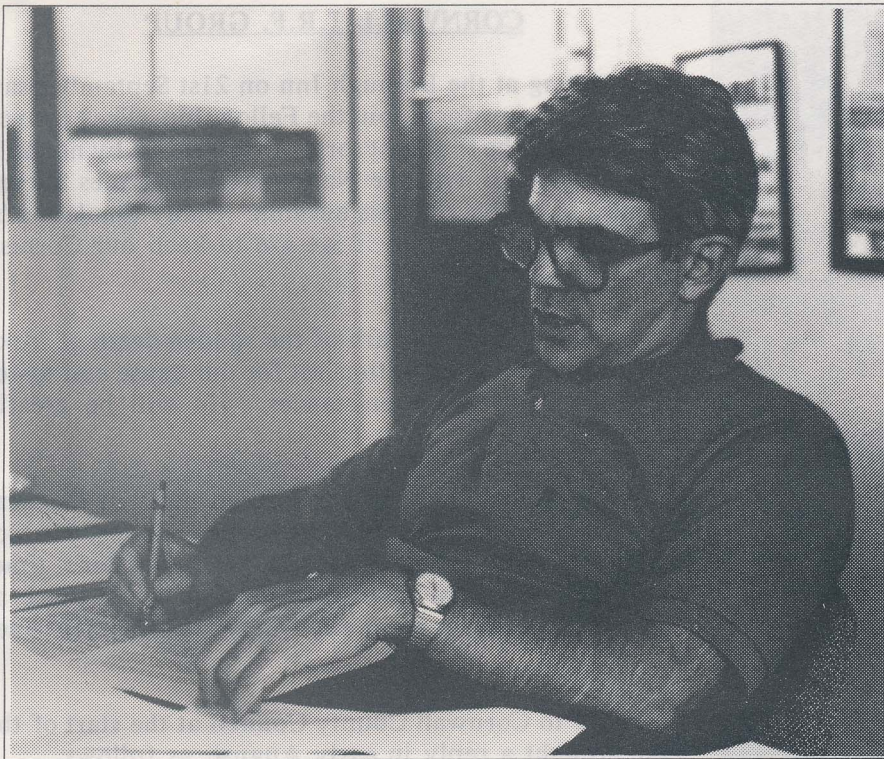
I started trail riding this year on my KLR650 and soon graduated to an old X2 250S for obvious reasons. The KLR had many advantages such as being able to get to the trail unders its own power. Also, it handled well under the right conditions.

If I pluck up courage, I may elaborate on this some other time, or describe my ride down to the Pyrenees and Spain during my holidays, Trail riding should be good down there.

All this depends on my girlfriend, she has never forgiven me for dropping her once in a deep puddle on the Ridgeway.

Alan, Tooting SW17.

PS. The main disadvantage of the KLR is that three other riders are needed to pick it up off you (ie. Brian Wright) while they themselves are helpless, due to severe laughter!



Left:
Chairman: Dave Giles looks serious.
National Executive Meeting, Walsall
September 24th.

FROM THE EDITOR

Reading the press and listening to the radio currently, one would think that the whole world was against us.

The Countryside Commission have applied to the Transport Secretary, Mr Cecil Parkinson, for a traffic regulation order banning motor vehicles on the Wessex Ridgeway on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

This is Body's second attempt to overcome "The Problem". The first failed because of lack of evidence.

Now the A.A. has joined forces with other bodies by recommending a ban on all Green Lanes. The growing (or should I say "crowing?") chorus now includes not only the ramblers, our long time opponents, but also the Country Land Owners Association, Sussex Downsmen Council for the Protection of Rural England, Friends of the Ridgeway, The Countryside Commission and the Automobile Association. The list seems endless.

The attitude of these people can be summed up as prejudice and sheer selfishness. Their opinions are based on uninformed and misinformed press reports "claimed superior values" said the Countryside Commission's own dart report in 1978 - a dangerous trend.

Do not despair. The Fellowship has members with abilities and "grey matter". The letters and contributions I am receiving illustrate just how much thought is being given to these pressing issues. I thank you for putting pen to paper. It keeps us all in touch with events.

However, if only more groups would send 'Representatives' to the national executive meetings in Walsall or Birmingham.....

There were only about 15 on Sunday 24th September 1989 at the A.M.C.A. Head Quarters and that included the T.R.F.'s officers! The current membership is nearly 1500.

One per cent deciding TRF policy. Is this democratic?

FROM THE BULLETIN PRODUCTION TEAM

The response to requests for articles, letters etc has been magnificent. Thanks to all of you who have had contributed. Keep sending 'em in. We will try to publish as many items as possible but apologies if your "masterpiece" has yet to appear. The editorial team is still developing.

We will try to include more photographs and to illustrate the other side of the TRF, there is a picture of Chairman M A O (D. Giles) in a deep study at the last National Executive Meeting in Walsall.

To be able to continue trail-riding requires much effort. Not everyone has the time, resources or will slog away at rights of way work. Just do your bit - whether it's a spot of lane-clearing or a letter. If every TRF member "adopted a lane" in his own parish, that's 1500 green lanes protected.

When the editor refers to the TRF as "The Movement" to a friend, he laughs! But we are moving - in the right direction too.



Another over-used lane ??

CORNWALL T.R.F. GROUP

Our meeting at the Borough Inn on 21st September saw a number of new faces join the Fellowship. They proved themselves to be the right sorts of trail riders by not only offering to help with the National Green Lanes Survey but also to lead a run this autumn. Many thanks, lads. We need more like you if we are to keep our Cornish green lanes open.

We were all saddened to learn of the sudden death of Mike Hull. He was a great enthusiast for our cause and tower of strength in all circumstances. He will be greatly missed.

Roger Fogg is leaving us for foreign parts in the near future - off to make his fortune in the colonies. He too, will be greatly missed but will be back some time. Meanwhile, the rest of us will need to work twice as hard, if we hope to maintain a network of green lanes to ride.

My letter to Cornwall County Council at the start of the year brought a reply in early August, as follows:

1.SX 193577 Crooksball. "The unclassified road is ill-defined at this point." Harry Ross knows the details of this lane and can advise on the correct route.

2.SX 216592 Pendruffle Wood. "The trees no longer obstruct the bridleway. The unclassified road from Carglonnan is passable on foot but is currently the subject of downgrading proposals. Telephone Mr M Walker, New County Hall, Truro 74282 Ext 2341 has further details." I wrote to Mr Walker in August and am still awaiting a reply. Please phone him if you have used the lane. It is the steepest, rockiest lane in Cornwall. If you've used it you will know what I mean.

3.SX 300585 Lydcott Wood. "The fallen trees have now been removed."

4.SX 226568 Tredinnick Farm. "The fallen trees have now been removed."

5.SX 346618 - 350617 Trewandra to Trenance. "Arrangements are being made for this lane to be pared out."

6.SX 174618 - 176619 Kilmansag. "This road has been totally overgrown and unused for many years. Funds are not presently available to clear it but should they become available in the future, the matter will be looked at again." I have offered our services to clear out this lane on behalf of the County Council and await their reply.

7.SX 249617 Rosenun Lane designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. "Your comments have been noted but neither the County Planning Officer nor the County Surveyor are aware of any problems concerning the SSSI designation."

I quote this lot in detail to show that it is worth writing to the Council. They are willing to listen and they will act on our behalf. Tell them and me, as TRF rights of way officer for Cornwall, of any problems you find on green lanes.

RUN DATES AND MEETINGS

Sunday 12th November 10.00 am meet at Bodmin Rugby Club car park (093654). This is just off the Bodmin bypass - turn towards Liskeard on the A38 and then first right towards Lanhydrock and you come to the rugby club just on your right.

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Sunday 10th December 10.00 am meet in the layby between Tresillian and Probus (882472) on the A390 five miles east of Truro.

NEXT BUSINESS MEETING

Thursday 14th December 7.30 for 8.00 pm at the London Inn, Summercourt (888561). We plan to have quarterly meetings to fix run dates and report on news and other business. Please try to attend if you possibly can.

NON-MEMBERS OF THE TRF

If you do not join the national TRF, you will receive no more newsletters. Send your name, address and phone number, plus ten pounds (cheque payable to TRF) to me or direct to National Membership Secretary, Tony Rose, 29 Anderson Drive, Kettering, Northants, NN15 5DG. Join now and you will be paid up till December 1990.

Ian Thompson
"Acting Dogs Body"
and R.O.W Officer



Lone rider :- XR crossing Afon-Melau near LLanfarchrth.

PLEASE SEND ALL BIRTH COPY TO DVN

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** STOP PRESS **

ATTENTION ALL GROUPS

If any group has any event planned that they would like to invited other group members to, please send details to the editor.

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

Somerset County Council has renamed its Highways, Planning & Transportation committee.

It is now "The Environment Committee" with a sub-committee called "Planning and consents". The development section of this sub-committee looks after "Roads", while the R.O.W section looks after R.U.P.Ps, Footpaths and Bridleways.

Trust that is clear to you all. (ED)

FOR SALE

Tow Bar fitting, BIKE RACK, unused, Cost £50, will accept £35. Registration Number board with lights, cable and plug, unused £10. Telephone Les 0454 260504 (North Avon)

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