

# GROUPS

## BRISTOL

Richard Tallon, Tel: 0249 715426  
2nd Monday, Tennis Court Inn, Deanery Road (A420), Kingswood

## CAMBRIDGE

Howard Biddle, Tel: 0223 232879  
1st Thursday, Golden Ball, Boxworth

## CHESHIRE

J. Johnson, Tel: 061 427 6963  
2 & 4 Monday, The Robin Hood, Buxton Road, High Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport

## CORNWALL

Roger Fogg, Tel: 0726 67198  
3rd Thursday, London Inn, Summercourt (A30)

## CUMBRIA

Roger Harris, Tel: 0539 725198  
2nd Wednesday, Albert Hotel, Bowness on Windermere

## DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE

David Bonsall, Tel: 0742 748688  
2 & 4 Tuesday, The Old Crown Inn, Handsworth Road, Sheffield

## DEVON

Martin Cooper, Tel: 0752 337491  
2nd Tuesday, The Welcome Stranger, Bickington, Nr. Newton Abbott

## DORSET

Pete Boyce, Tel: 0305 783210  
1st Tuesday, The Royal Oak, Bere Regis

## EAST MIDLANDS

Graham Chinnery, Tel: 0332 863433  
2nd Wednesday, Three Horseshoes, Hemmington, Nr. M1 Junct. 24

## EAST SCOTLAND

Les Mollison, Tel: 0382 738530  
2nd Wednesday, Glencarse Hotel, A85, Perth to Dundee Rd

## ESSEX

Neil Gamble, Tel: 0245 461643  
4th Tuesday, The White Horse, Old London Road, Widford, Chelmsford

## GLOUCESTER

Ron Carter, Tel: 045 382 2707  
1st Tuesday, Painswick Institute, Painswick, Glos.

## HERTFORDSHIRE

Alan Vincent, Tel: 0923 775263  
1st Wednesday, The Coach & Horses, Newgate Street, Near Cuffly

## ISLE OF WIGHT

Mick Holbrook, Tel: 0983 866361  
Last Thursday, Liberal Club, Longford Rd, Shanklin, I.O.W

## KENT

Nick Moon, Tel: 0322 862855  
2nd Tuesday, Pied Bull, Farningham, Nr. Brands Hatch

## LANCASHIRE

Keith Westley, Tel: 0704 893215  
1st Tuesday, Hindshead Pub on A49, Charnock Richard

## LINCOLNSHIRE

Alan Wilkinson, Tel: 0529 60793  
4th Thursday, The Mall, Woodhall, Spar

## LODDON VALE

Don Lewis, Tel: 0252 616359  
2nd Thursday, The Lamb, Theale, Berkshire  
NORFOLK & SUFFOLK - To be Advised  
NORTH MIDLANDS  
Ray Morse, Tel: 0785 661543  
1st Tuesday, Leek Area - Contact group rep (above)

## NORTHUMBRLAND

Dave Vaughan, Tel: 091 529 3202  
3rd Tuesday, Ryton Rugby Club, Ryton

## NORTH WALES

John Mills, Tel: 0477 34425  
1st Wednesday, Hope & Anchor, Ewloe Place, Buckley, Chwydd

## SHROPSHIRE

Steve Rodenhurst, Tel: 0952 244161  
2nd & last Wednesday, The Bell, Crosshouses, Shrewsbury

## SOMERSET

Nick Crocker, Tel: 093589 261  
Last Thursday, The Globe Inn, Somerton

## SOUTHERN

Pete Wildsmith, Tel: 0703 617582  
3rd Wednesday, The Priory Inn, Bishops Waltham, Hampshire

## SOUTH LONDON & SURREY

Brian Wright, Tel: 081 669 4214  
9pm Every Wednesday, Epsom & Ewell F.C., West St, Ewell

## SUSSEX

Bevis Billingham, Tel: 0243 585128 Last Thursday, Ashing on Soc. Club, Rr. of Red Lion, A24, 9 miles N. of Worthing

## TEESIDE & NORTH YORKS

Leo Crone, Tel: 0325 380117  
1st & 3rd Wednesday, Station Hotel, Stokesley

## THAMES VALLEY

Bob Williams, Tel: 0990 24958  
3rd Monday, District Arms, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middlesex

## WEST ANGLIA

David Knight, Tel: 0933 313816  
1 & 3 Thursday, Scott Bader Clubhouse, Opp. Parish Church, Woolaston, Wellingborough

## WEST MIDLANDS

Dennis Hayter, Tel: 0527 23550  
1 & 3 Thursday, Wilmcote Mens Club, Wilmcote, Nr. Stratford on Avon

## WEST WALES

G. Jones, Tel: 0239 810255 - Meets to be arranged  
WEST WALES (WTRA), Bill Kershaw, Tel: 0633 895241

## WEST YORKSHIRE

Gordon Carr Tel: 0535 644568  
1 & 3 Thursday, Bankfoot Cricket Club, Wickets Close, (off Cleckheaton Rd.), Odsal, Bradford

## WILTSHIRE

Bill Riley, Tel: 02216 3811  
1st Tuesday, The Toll House, Holt, Trowbridge

## WYVERN

Gwyn James, Tel: 0902 763824  
Every Thursday, Hill & Cakemore Ex-Servicemen's Club, Victoria Road, Blackheath



# TRAIL

NOVEMBER 1991

No. 160

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

EDITOR: Mike "Nettlebed" Pedley.



This should be a picture of a motorbike, but no-one sent one in. Have you something topical, interesting, funny or spectacular?

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Try to make it interesting! . . . .

All contributions to the Editor

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## EDITOR

The weasel has just sent me a copy of an article from some obscure journal describing how Berkshire County Council have suddenly taken an interest in rights-of-way - other than removing them from maps that is!

Interested local groups or individuals are being encouraged to adopt a lane and carry out simple maintenance tasks such as clearing vegetation, regular inspection and passing any information regarding obstructions or other problems to the Council's Highways Department.

In return the Council will loan basic hand tools and provide stamped addressed envelopes for the written reports. They have also taken the step of insuring the volunteers.

Personally, I can't knock it! Seems a great idea and not unlike a similar proposal suggested by our RoW Officer, Tim Stevens some time ago in which members of his local group (Lancs) were asked to choose a lane, preferably where they lived or rode regularly and generally keep an eye on it. (Tim has also organised working parties on lanes in the Yorkshire Dales).

Do we have a group in the Newbury area of Berkshire? If so, they could do worse than become involved in this scheme at least on RoW's with vehicular rights and thus demonstrate that we are interested in preserving routes as well as riding them (to quote Gwyn Thomas).

Should the idea spread to other parts of the Country then perhaps we should be vigilant and ensure that we are seen to be involved in these high-profile activities by volunteering our expertise before others (who shall be nameless) steal our thunder as it were.....

NETTLEBED

# LETTERS

## Just a thought on "What's that?"

This is the normal response I receive from people outside my "sport". I don't like my hobby / recreation being called a sport. Stamp collecting, photography - they don't call these sport, so why is Trail Riding or even Motorcycling? (Driving a car is not a sport).

Why do I trail ride? This is something I have often thought about, especially when I'm trying to extract 200lbs of metal from some bottomless bog; or attempting to climb a track with the same 200lbs of metal, when the last person who succeeded had probably used crampons; or when it's p...ing down early in the morning, the bed's warm and I'm getting up to go out in it and it's Sunday. If my employer said he wanted me to do the same things I do when Trail Riding, my reply would be "The second word is off, on my wages!". This is hypothetical as I don't have an employer (Just in case someone reads this who knows me).

Talking of people who know me, that's something that Trail Riding has given me - friends, buddies, mates, acquaintances - whatever, a great bunch of people and some characters. I've visited some of the most beautiful scenery in this country, even though it may be raining. Places like the Welsh Mountains, Yorkshire Moors, Exmoor, even the West Midlands can bring something out in me that is hard to explain. (?)

So when people say "What's that?" all I usually say is "Oh, I ride on roads and ancient highways...", but before you get too far their eyes glaze over with the same look that I most likely give when they talk about football, gardening etc.

Trail Riding should be talked about, advertised and given as high a profile as possible. Let everyone know we're here and riding and mean to stay.

*On another note...* Have you heard the joke "What do you call an Irishman who bounces off walls?" Answer "Rick O'Shea". I think that Mr. O'Shea, if this is not a wind up, will start the bullets flying. How anyone can suggest that committee members freeloader off the TRF just shows how little they\* participate in club matters. (\*Mr. O'Shea).

I am a local group rep and going to executive meetings, telephone calls to local club members, return calls to enquiries from BHS events and new members etc. adds up to a fair cost over the year, which I do not recover. For the likes of committee members I would imagine this to be a considerable amount which I doubt that they fully recover - and what about their time which can never be refunded.

How do you join the elite Mr. O'Shea? You don't need an invitation, just put yourself up for election. So put up or shut up as the saying goes!

*Dean Hayter. West Midlands.*

## Stirrings

In the editorial of Trail No.151 the editor writes of the Trail Riders Fellowship being founded in the early seventies. It is my view that Trail Riding is as old as Motorcycling itself. Insofar as in the early days of motorcycling few roads had been given any treatment with tar and any deviation from main routes between towns would be very much intended only for local use of horse drawn traffic.

The Scott Trial originated because A.A.Scott considered that most individuals, let alone motorcyclists, of his day were incapable of following a given route through Yorkshire or any other countryside. To prove his opinion he challenged several local motorcyclists to ride a route marked on a map; this route used many of the trails that we still use today. Although competition plays no part in trail riding, my point is that motorcyclists have always been riding trails even if they only

thought that they were riding a road because it was there, which is surely the best reason for trail or road riding.

Early motorcyclists and later ones up to the time when it became needful to put a name to what until then had been a normal thing to do, rode where their fancy took them within the law.

I can recall a club run with a local non-sporting going from Teeside to Ruddland Rigg into Farndale, all done on road-going motorcycles and sidecar outfits. This was 1949 so most of the machines were pre 1939 and such runs, petrol rationing permitting, were not considered unusual. A road to somewhere existed, so it was ridden.

So let us not think that what we do is new just because we now have to have specially built motorcycles to do it on.

*On another note...* While re-reading Ian Thompson's excellent book "Exploring Green Roads & Lanes of Great Britain" in order to mark up my maps with his ride through the North of England, I had an idea that may be of help to group RoW officers who find the marking up of members maps both time consuming and a bore.

Why not produce a list for each OS map giving map references, a grading - i.e. moderate, hard and impossible, together with a brief comment on any salient feature. These could then be typed up and photo-copied and supplied for a small fee to any member wanting his maps marked.

The member can then mark up his own maps, providing he is capable of reading map references and transferring them on to a map. In fact I am sure that the mental exercise involved in either producing these lists or in having to identify a trail from a set of references would sharpen up anyone's wits!

*Eric Wilson. Darlington.*

*Taking Eric's idea a stage further, how about a database for all trails. With computer indexing by area, map no., name, grading and classification etc. - or any combination of these and other features, it would indeed save a lot of valuable time and effort. Equally important, it would help us to keep a continually updated picture of our available lanes, which could only aid our negotiating position when dealing with other bodies, friendly or otherwise.*

*I have both the software and hardware available to achieve this task with relative ease - depending of course on the right input from all groups.*

*Let me have your thoughts on this, via the editor. (Steve Griffiths. Lancs)*

## Ramblers and RUPPs

I am writing about something that Mike 'Nettlebed' Pedley mentioned in the September issue's editorial. He quotes from a local newspaper article which concerned a pleasant days walk in the countryside being spoilt by the "screaming of track motorcycles tearing up the way - deep ruts were witness that this is not a new pursuit here. Two cars and a van are used as a base by the riders and their friends who risk safety without helmets". Mike Pedley goes on to brand the bikers as "just idiots who do not know any better". In doing that he indirectly takes the journalist's word for it that what was reported was what actually happened. Why should we take the ramblers word for it? Maybe the bikers were on a BOAT and maybe the ruts were caused by farm and 4WD vehicles. In my experience they are often the last people to go for objective facts or an unbiased opinion - in other words they see what they want to see.

You would expect that the type of Rambler who lays down the law or rears up in self-righteous indignation at a supposed affront to their rights would be well clued up on the distinction between footpaths, bridleways and byways and their user rights but they often have only the haziest notions of rights of way. I have been harangued on more than one occasion by walkers who it is obvious after talking to them that they believe that any country lane not covered in tarmac can have no vehicular rights. (Unless it's used by a farmer when it's okay because they are just doing their job.) Another time, I and two fellow riders were accused of using a "bridleway" as a racetrack after

riding a byway back the way we had come (sticking to the TRF speed limit) purely because we had enjoyed it so much on the way up!

Another example of misinformed rambl(er)ings is shown in a letter received by the Guardian a few weeks ago by the Revd. Norman Charlton who claims many years experience walking in the Lake District. He complains of the erosion caused by ill disciplined walkers, mountain bikers and motorbikes. He points out that "motorcycles.....*seem* to be free to drive over such places as Gatesgarth, tearing up the surface and making tracks quite dangerous for ordinary fell walkers" (my italics); later he calls for "the total prohibition of motorcycles from all tracks, keeping them, like cars, to metalled roads". Now never having ridden the lakes I can't say whether bikes are allowed on Gatesgarth or not but I do know that in general he writes as if the only reason motorbikes are allowed on certain trails is due to a dreadful oversight by the National Parks governing body and all it needs to ban them is a tightening up of the rule book - probably the same way that they have banned cars?!

From the way he writes he shows that he has absolutely no conception of what a byway with vehicular rights is and so it seems that merely being a walker of long standing automatically gives you a platform to spout ill-informed opinions from a position of assumed authority.

What I am saying is not news - most trail riders have similar stories - and it would be laughable except that it is often these people who are listened to when it comes to policy making. What is it that makes the opinions of ramblers sacrosanct? Even Mike Pedley falls into the trap of assuming that the ramblers in his newspaper article had got their facts right. In fairness, the chances are that they were a couple of kids on field bikes with their mates turning up to cheer them on. But until we start questioning the sanctimonious utterings of ramblers, nobody else will.

*Dave Stacey. London*

P.S. Green Roads Preservation Society? - I like the sound of that; maybe with that name we could spout off in a self-righteous manner and give the ramblers a dose of their own medicine!

**Cornhill Inn - Part Three. This week : Reply from Rhayader (or Radnor's Revenge....)**

Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear! No sooner do we get a new group established, than along comes a 'knocker' in the form of Mr. Short of London, full of criticism and accusations. Is this a personal vendetta Mr. Short? Did I forget to oil your chain? Dry your boots? Change your nappy? I most certainly didn't forget to send back your false teeth when you left them behind!

This just goes to prove that our general group feeling about people coming into the area is correct. I will therefore exercise my right of reply to Mr. Short's allegations:

(1) **Illegal Riding.** Mr. Short alleges that I have been taking riders out on illegal runs. WHAT ON Mr. Short? As those who have been to the Cornhill this year will know, I do not have a bike to ride, having sold my S10 (?) to buy a sidecar outfit to compete in the British Championship events.

Earlier this year I was made a political scapegoat to cover the illegal riding activities of some local enduro riders (some big names included). Because I proved my innocence (I have letters from Welsh Water and Forestry thanking me for my assistance and guidance in curtailing these activities) I became the "Villain" in some local eyes and had to tolerate a fair bit of muck-throwing. All this has since died down and all is well.

(2) **Land Owners.** As many of our customers know, I enjoy very good relations with the local landowners, which gives me extensive use of private land to our mutual benefit.

(3) **RoW Officers.** Mr. Short asks why Roger Bailey has not done something about a TRF group in the area. He has, having been appointed and accepted that most thankless of tasks, with Brian Rees as his helper. More power to their elbows!

As I close, I feel I must add that I have never taken Mr. Short out on a trail ride and I am curious as to where he gets all this information - or is it just heresay and jealousy?

In short, Mr. Short - Put up or shut up!

*The Rhayader Villain. AKA Bob Buck*

**Talking of which.....**

The last of the "Corn-y-Hill" and privileged few verses the rest saga? (*Probably not. Ed.*)

I was a TRF member up to three years ago but, due to a lack of action and acknowledgments from the officers of the time, I left. Firstly you appealed for articles - I wrote two, both were not published or even acknowledged. Secondly, you appealed for material for a British trail bike series - I sent photos of my BSA B44 special and my BSA CCM extra special, they were not used or returned. (*Before I was the editor! Ed.*) Thirdly and most importantly, I TWICE asked for help saving three threatened county roads. Guess what? Nothing. So I gave up and left the TRF. When Powys County Council went to Builth court to stop up the CR's the only other person there was WTRA's Charlie Morris who had been contacted about a fourth lane and then had heard about my three. The CC withdrew their application as their main argument was that nobody wanted them, whereas I had three years proof that I had been in correspondence with them to have these lanes opened. Also I caught their solicitor posting "notices of intent" later than the law required.

Now to hopefully end the Bob Buck rumours. The forest ranger who stopped the group of riders in Abbey Cwm Mir forest has been questioned and has admitted that he does not know the identity of the group leader and when asked for a description, gave what is unmistakably the description of a well known resident of Rhayader, but NOT Bob Buck. Ray Short had good reason to believe it to be Bob due to the tremendous amount of rumours floating around. I myself questioned Bob due to things said to me by 'officials'. There seems to be a conspiracy against Bob Buck in Rhayader as his interests are in conflict with the narrow-minded thinking of the local competition club officials. Recent local history, Powys CC RoW records and ACU records would bear out their anti-trail riding policy. And due to this policy I have been pushed to write to the ACU suggesting that it would be more democratic if a non-biased ACU person represented the area, as the present "arrangement" is a major stumbling block to the TRF and to true legal status of RoW's in Powys.

I will no doubt be accused of being an outsider interfering, but I would inform these people that I was asked to do the job by Welshmen as well, to help protect Welshmen's legal rights as well as English people's, who use the area. I did not at first volunteer, in fact not until, all present, agreed to abide by the TRF's code of conduct and general ethics.

Here's looking forward to cooperation and tranquility on Radnor's green lanes.

*Roger Bailey. Radnor RoWO*

**You'll never guess.....**

I recently had a superb weekend's trail riding at (you guessed it..) the Cornhill Inn, Rhayader. Although Bob didn't lead us, he kindly marked our maps. I'm sure the Cheshire group won't forget the long steep shale climb through the trees. Did it really take us two hours to cover half a mile? The terrain I encountered on my XT350 revealed that the gearing was far too high, the rear wheel just span and dug in at every opportunity, despite a road-legal Pirelli enduro tyre. I can recommend Chainmail, Farnham (see TMX ads.) who have now supplied me with a 520 chain and a variety of sprockets to play with. Initial impressions are that a 14 tooth front and 48 rear, giving about 20% reduction, improves engine braking on steep descents and allows steady ascents without the wheelspin I previously needed to avoid stalling (on Rymer Rake for example). Do any of our readers have experience of converting the engine de-compressor to manual operation? I am concerned that the rear wheel may lock, stalling the engine, during critical moments on steep slippery descents and would hope that fine control over the engine compression would solve this potential problem.

I am generally happy with the bike but, like other group members, find the starting unpredictable. In cold weather a dozen kicks may be needed.

When things are warm, if it's not responded by the third kick, a brief pause and a few swear words seems to work wonders.

I agree with people who say that the seat height is excessive, even at 6'2" I occasionally fail to find the ground in rutted going, resulting in a forced dismount. A pair of Renthall bars have replaced my steel ones, which eventually called it a day and being slightly straighter make it easier to ride standing up.

I'm sure we all wish Geoff Bostock a speedy recovery, his hard work for the Cheshire group is much missed.

*John Tait. Cheshire*

#### TRF at the seat of power?

I read somewhere (probably MCN) the other week that a new Motorcycle club had been formed by several Members of Parliament.

Now the chances are that, out of say half a dozen to a dozen members, at least one of them has some knowledge or even dormant interest in leaving the tarmac for something a little more challenging occasionally.

Wouldn't it be a good idea for one (some) of our more politically adept committee members to find out and possibly develop a contact and even enlist an honorary member!

Could be kind of useful on the odd occasion, don't you think.....

*Steve Griffiths. Lancs.*

## GROUP NEWS

### LODDON VALE - an appeal.

The Loddon Vale Group is now twelve years old and was originally formed by members of Thames Valley / South Midland groups to serve the many members in the Reading area. Little has been written in the "Bulletin" of our activities apart from one or two contentious issues in the past, but it's time to put pen to paper.

The Group has both formal & informal meetings at two venues each month, and enjoys various Talk & Film nights plus the Annual Auction. We've even tried trail riding camping weekends

Until recently the Group has had two or three weekends away each year meeting and riding with TRF members in that area. A formal run locally occurs each third Sunday in addition to some midweek "ad hoc" activities. A provisional diary of events is usually published and circulated by the end of February.

The Group has suffered in the past by not having enough run leaders to cope with the numbers attending (how unusual) and therefore did not advertise these runs, relying on final details being announced at the preceding meeting. The monthly runs often had between 8-12, slightly more if it was an away weekend. Our association with Equestrian bodies has never been stronger.

The Group is financially sound thanks to the overworked few who attend these horse events, some 480 hrs this year (you may have read my letters in T&MX and MCN recently).

The venue in Theale would be hard to beat, a well appointed pub clubhouse only a few minutes away from the A4/M4 and at a reasonable rent- now serving various local real ales

The membership list suggests a Group of 35+ members and until last year had regular attendances of 15-20 new and old. Over the years various meeting formats have been tried to suit those currently involved.

#### WHY THEN THIS APPEAL ?

Sadly unless the Loddon Vale Group gets an injection of active members it is in danger of not existing in this form beyond the forthcoming AGM on 12th December which starts at 8.00pm at

at "The Lamb".

Several of its founder members still sit on the committee as no-one else is prepared to serve, but after more than a decade they are running out of ideas and I suspect that all four offices will be vacated.

It has always been our policy to welcome new faces but many are never seen beyond the first meeting or run. Despite the efforts of this dedicated few, attendances at past AGM's has been poor, even with the bribe of a free beer & sarnies Our monthly meeting attendances are down to 6-8 (not enough to cover the rent). Monthly runs are down to 2-3 riders. Both weekends away and the camping weekend this year were cancelled through lack of support.

So to all those members in the Reading area, the message is clear- come along on December 12th, take part in the AGM - organise the Group its meeting & activities the way YOU want them.

**ABOVE ALL SUPPORT THOSE WHO PUT IN THE TIME & EFFORT FOR YOU!**

*Colin Patient. Loddon Vale*

*From the same stable as Rick O'Shea!*

### EAST MIDLANDS

In the twenty plus years I have been motor cycling I have been in several clubs of which many members sat and talked about the 1966 T.T. etc., over more pints than I could drink.

I would rather ride my bike than talk about it, so when I joined the T.R.F. two years ago I found that my needs were very well catered for!! The East Midlands group meet on the second Wednesday of the month and ALWAYS have a run on the following Sunday. I have had many memorable days on my bike with the T.R.F. My thanks go to the run leaders; and organisers, extra thanks to Graham Franks for help with transport and punctures.

One of the best days, involved four of us meeting at 8-00am just outside Derby. Mark, Alan, Derek and myself set off with full tanks and a packed lunch for Lady Bower Reservoir in North Derbys. On route we rode quite a few lanes, Pilsbury near Hartington, through the river then up the steep rutted climb to the gate. (I have never seen anybody ride straight up there). Hollinsclough loose rocks and another fairly steep climb, Tenter Hill, rock steps down to the pack horse bridge, then a series of hairpins, littered with rocks. We now did some road miles as we wanted lunch at Lady Bower. Across Dirt Low Rake bought us down into Castleton and on to Hope where we picked up the Roman road up to Hope Cross, the lane then goes down through the woods across the River Ashop and the A57 and in a couple of miles we came to the reservoir where we stopped for lunch. While we were eating, two fellow T.R.F. members rode up. They were from the Lincs group, Alan on a KMX 200 and I think Richard on a four stroke Suzuki.

After a chat and lunch we set off again to find a couple of lanes Alan had told us about. One of these bought us back to Hope Cross and back down to Hope Village. Our next lane was to be the infamous Chapel Gate. When we saw the "improvements" to the lane we were very disappointed. What used to be 'one of the best' is now like a motorway, you could drive a car up it. After a few photo's we rode Roych Clough towards Hayfield, this is not a motorway! Later in the afternoon, we met up with Alan and Richard again and six of us rode South riding a lot more lanes, eventually parting company at Monsale Dale at 6.30pm. Us four now got on the A6 and headed for home, but when we got into Matlock the road was blocked by a lorry stuck under a low bridge, so we took a nice green lane from Starkholmes down to Cromford to avoid the obstruction, in doing this Alan punctured his rear tyre and although we had the tools etc., to repair it, we decided to Finelec it to get home.

I eventually arrived home at 8.15, tired and hungry, showing 189 miles on the trip having had an excellent day out for about a fiver!

I have now got to wait nearly ten days for the next time, the club run in Northamptonshire.

*Bob Woodcock. East Midlands.*

Picture, it you can, the scene. Behind us the stiff climb up the Col de la Sausse, through the Foret Domaniale d'Aiguebelle, and a sneaky traverse across rotten shale around towards the distant tarmac, when we are faced by a battered peasant farmer. Forcing half formed words between two teeth and a dark brown dog-end he asks where we are going.

"Down there to the road, north towards Volvent, and then over the Champ-Rabi to the Pas de la Pousterle."

I omit to tell him that the last time we went that way a bunch of Frenchmen on outfits had three goes at making a front brake torque arm out of fencing wire. (Perhaps it was his wire, and anyway I couldn't think of the word for torque arm.) Then he asks whether we are Dutch or German. My O level French has them all baffled. When he learns we are English he brightens a bit. As we ride away he calls me back with lots of waving of stick and swearing, and I think someone must have ridden over his foot or perhaps his scabby dog. Back I go in soothe mode, but no, he was swearing at the dog, not us.

'Why don't you go up the track round the back of the farm there? It goes up to a plateau and through the oak trees and comes out just below the Col de la Maure.'

Why not indeed, it will save a couple of miles of tarmac, but it is not on my marked map... A splendid track it turns out to be, among trees ranging from mustard yellow to scarlet, with the hard jurassic limestone tinkling under our wheels, and the wild lavender brushing our boots. A farmer inviting us to use a green road - just think of that the next time someone tries to chase you off 'his' land. Perhaps revolutions are no bad thing, or did we just have ours too early!

No doubt someone else in the party will be telling you more about the 1991 TRF trip to the Diois; as for the rest of you, well, you missed a good week. Next time perhaps?"

#### WINGE:

The AGM went almost without incident, as you will have read in last months tabloid section. Pity that so few of you turned up, but then trail riding is much more interesting than setting the club on course for the next twenty one years.

#### GOOD NEWS - and DOOM & GLOOM:

Good news is coming in from Mid Wales, and for Willy Eckerslike and his mates, some doom and gloom too. A new TRF group is forming in the Builth Wells area, and they have already written in for advice about the 'Abergynolwn downgrading'. The question goes like this: We see in Trail that a track with vehicular rights can be downgraded to a bridleway at a public inquiry, but even so the vehicular rights are not affected. So can we ride the Abergynolwn track or not?

The answer is: Yes you are right, but no you can't. When a track is shown on the 'definitive map' as a footpath or bridleway that does not affect its true status, (but you try convincing a farmer). So a track can be downgraded, perhaps because no-one bothers to claim our rights, or they don't make a good job of presenting the evidence, and you may still ride it *as long as you have enough evidence to convince a magistrate that vehicular rights do exist after all*. It is up to you to have the evidence, and it is no use saying that it is on someone's marked up map, or that a mate said it would be OK. Evidence means documents, and long public use as of right, and long hours in the record office, but once you have it, off you go and enjoy yourself.

So what is different about Abergynolwn? (I do hope we have got the spelling right at least once in all this! Why couldn't they call it Wet Lane or something simple like that?) This lane is different because it was not 'downgraded', a word normally used for the 'definitive map' process. Instead it was 'extinguished', at a magistrates court. Nothing to do with the 'definitive' map, all that was

necessary was to convince The Bench that this narrow rocky track up the side of a Welsh mountain was 'unnecessary?'. In other words that you could go round without too much hardship. Not a difficult task and the fact that the Chairman of the Bench (boss magistrate) was the lord of the manor was nothing whatsoever in the slightest to do with it... So vehicular rights were extinguished, they became extinct and that was an end to the matter. Sorry chaps, you will do much better to look elsewhere.

That was the doom, now the gloom bit. Not a million miles away is a track which is an old coach road leading across open moorland, and this one has got vehicular rights and is properly recorded as such on the 'definitive' map. Not many lanes like that in Mid Wales.

The problem is that certain persons are riding up the green road and then just wallying about on the open ground as if it belonged to no-one and they had every right to be there. Wrong. Even if the ground is 'Common Land' that gives NO-ONE a right to ride about on it. The exact area is to the north-west of Dderw, OS:9626867 just outside Rhayader. This problem has now got to the ears of the local council whose attitude is summed up as:

'You have every right to ride along this road, but that is all. If you cannot do something to stop this illegal trespassing we will have to.'

And what they might do is put a TRO on it. Or of course they could go along to the magistrates and say it was unnecessary. At the moment they would have overwhelming local support, so however much we jump up and down saying we need it for recreation the magistrate may not be convinced. After all the magistrate and his mates all live there, and they don't want their nice common spoiled by brown marks everywhere. Neither do I. So if you see someone off the proper track, or even on it with an illegal vehicle, tell the police. Or tell me, and I will act. Just make sure you have a photo or two, some way of identifying the wrongdoers (eg. the registration number of bike or trailer), and preferably one or two witnesses. If we don't get it stopped it will get us stopped.

#### SULTAN OF DURHAM?

Several of our northern lads have been stopped on a lane across a grouse moor. It seems they have enough of the right sort of evidence, and they await the court case fairly eagerly. They are keen to claim the road as a Byway once the court case is out of the way. It also seems that this would be likely to get lots of local support because of the high-handed way the new landowner has been behaving. For one thing, the locals are not pleased that someone from away should have all the sheep rounded up and sold, to save the ground for the grouse. All the wildlife in Oman has been Shot or so it seems, and Durham is to be next.



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That's all for now' the rest of this space is reserved for your rights of way news.

(EMPTY SPACE...)

**TIM STEVENS**

**LOCAL TRF GROUP NUMBERS — 1991**

East Midlands	65
Cheshire	50
Lancashire	48
West Yorkshire	47
Bristol	45
Teeside N.Yorks	44
Southern	42
Kent	40

Cumbria	36
Hertfordshire	36
Sussex	36
West Midlands	34
Cambridgeshire	30
Thames Valley	28
Loddon Vale	26
Gloucestershire	26
S.Yorks/Derbys.	21
North Midlands	21

S.London/Surrey	20
Devon	20
West Anglia	18
East Yorkshire	18
Wyvern	18
Northumberland	16
Somerset	15
Wiltshire	14
Dorset	14
ex	

Lincolnshire	13
North Wales	13
Cornwall	12
Shropshire	10
Isle of Wight	6
Norfolk / Suffolk	4
East Scotland	3

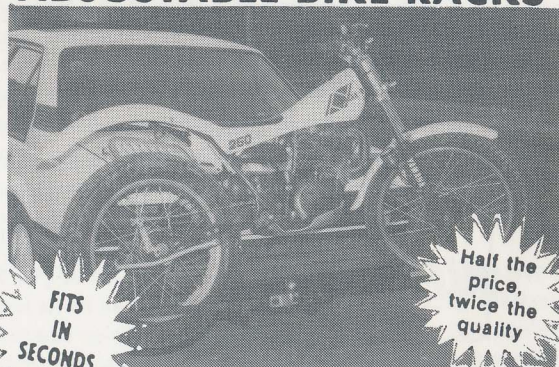
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**Sharing...**

**SELF-REGULATION:** As I write the Quorn Hunt is in disarray because in digging out a fox cub and letting it loose into the waiting pack it has broken with it's own code of conduct. As a result it may well lose land over which it wishes to run it's events and has certainly lost credibility in a world increasingly hostile to it's sport. Leaving the moral issue of fox-hunting entirely to one side, I believe the case to be very instructive for members of the TRF. For a start it illustrates the changing opinion of people to recreation in the countryside and just how powerful that opinion must be when it can challenge the traditional sport of some of the richest and most influential people in England. I didn't know before that fox-hunting had a code of conduct and I find it instructive to learn that in the face of hostility even hunting has found it necessary to regulate itself before public pressure brings greater restrictions. By the time you read this we will all know a lot more about the outcome of this case, hopefully we can learn from it.

**THE 21st AGM:** I thought it was a good AGM, the presence of ten founder members gave it a sense of perspective. I gained a strong impression that our guests found the child that they had nurtured had grown into an adult they could be proud of. Welcome Brian Wright as our new Public Relations Officer and thank-you Gwynn for the excellent job that you have made of this post; welcome Richard Marshall as our new Vice-Chairman. The other officers remain as before but next year will see many changes.

**GOING GREEN:** The adoption of the proposal to increase the annual membership fee to fifteen pounds in order to support further active rights of way work is to be congratulated, with one bold step the membership has provided the means by which we can vigorously pursue the single most important activity to our future riding and gained a tremendous public relations coup! What other user group spends twenty per cent of their total income for the year on work that is for the mutual benefit of all? Put that way it gives us a considerable edge at the negotiating table,

**BE PROUD OF YOUR TRF MEMBERSHIP:** In future, members are asked to carry their membership cards with them when they trail ride so they may identify themselves as current TRF members. This is now part of our Code of Conduct to differentiate ourselves from the cowboys.

**SUPPORT YOUR CLUB:** I know when you're out there with miles and miles of country all to yourself that the temptation is to think 'Who needs rules, who needs RoW work, who needs to go to committee meetings? Let me answer it this way: How far ahead does the expert rider look? How far ahead does he read the terrain? How does he avoid the worst of the bog? The TRF functions through it's executive meetings, it needs a representative from every group to be there to understand and take back information as to what is happening in a fast changing countryside. If it's going to be managed, where are you going to be, IN or OUT?

**SUCCESSION:** Similarly, the membership should note that four executive officers have given notice that they will be standing down at the next AGM. They are: The Chairman; The Vice-Chairman; The Secretary; and The Treasurer. It is essential that groups / individuals start to come forward now to ensure sensible continuity. (Perhaps Rick O'Shea from Loddon Vale will offer his services and qualify for that free lunch.....Ed.).

The next executive meeting is Saturday the 23rd of November at Walsall, please see that you are represented.\*

**Dave Giles. National Chairman.**

\* Individual members who do not belong to a group may attend as observers if they contact me or the secretary before the meeting and subject only to available space.

Some of the longer serving members of the TRF may remember an article I wrote some 7 years ago about the early Honda XR250 RE. In it I concluded that it was a nice bike for trail riding but was riddled with reliability problems and that I probably would not buy another.

First of all the kickstart mechanism broke after a couple of months and had to be repaired under warranty. About a year after that the clutch bearing broke taking along with it a crankcase half. This was sort of repaired under warranty after much hassle with the dealer and Honda UK. Because of a house sale I sold the bike to a friend who for about two years, had little trouble with it.

Some of you may remember an off-road bike test day which was run at Golding Barn. This had a nice selection of motocrosser~ and enduro bikes to test out. I booked a couple of MXers plus some enduro bikes. I rode all the bikes they had, an IT200, KDX200, TT600 and an XR250. The most fun and easiest to ride quick was the KDX200 but like a fool I thought the XR250 would be the better trail machine. I should have known better because during the second blast around the track the engine died suddenly. I never found out what the problem was but it seemed terminal.

I purchased another XR250, this time an RF thinking that the reliability problems had been sorted. My wife who knows little about bikes thought that I should not buy another XR250, I ignored her much to my cost. But the dealer assured me that they had had no problems so I coughed up £1300 and took delivery.

I registered this one as a 'C' reg. in late 1985 and carefully ran it in. This one ran for a little longer, about 18 months in fact until I took it to the IoM TT in 1987. During the week it gradually became more and more rattly and so I decided it probably was due for a top end overhaul (just like a 2 stroke but more fiddly).

I took it to bits (lots of bits as XR owners realise when they take one apart) and put in new rings and sundry other parts. This lasted for about 3 months when the rattle returned. I decided that the bike must be sold but before I could get rid of it, it blew up spectacularly riding along a dual carriageway at 60 mph, locking the back wheel in the process. Pushing it back home and lifting the head was a shock. A valve had dropped punching a hole in the piston and taking the other valves with it. It looked expensive and since one of the valve seats had also gone it looked like a new head might be needed.

I had a metallurgist colleague look at the valve and he thought it looked like fatigue. I wrote to Honda UK and received a reply that it was not their policy to entertain such claims. Thanks! In the meantime I came across another knackered XR. This one was in an enduro, stuck in a bog with terminal top end death rattle. I heard many a similar tale from other trail riding acquaintances. Fortunately a friend in the TRF told me of a grass track engineer who could fit valve seats and do ally welding. I took the head to him and was told it could be done, no problem. This was duly carried out and the engine reassembled. I put the motor back into the frame and much to my astonishment it ran like a wristwatch.

Itching to get back on the trail I took the bike on the Ashford run where it worked well, but by this time I was getting bored with it and afraid of the porcelain nature of the engine. I put an ad. in T+MX saying the usual platitudes like excellent condition and ideal trail bike.

Enter one person for whom I now have the utmost contempt, who we shall simply call Cret, although that's not his real name.

"I would like to look at your bike, is tonight OK?" says Cret. "Yes but you might prefer to look at it on Saturday in the daylight" I replied. "OK, agreed" says Cret.

Saturday arrived and the bike was duly examined but because of an oil leak that had appeared, the price was knocked down. I explained the reasons I was selling, viz XR250s are crap, have awful engines and have weird handling (high profile selling this!) and that I wanted a KDX. No problems, cash and cheques were exchanged and the bike taken away.

Two weeks later Cret called back bleating that a motorcycle dealer that we shall call Feline Bikes had given him a quote of several hundred pounds to fix the engine. This was a shock since I had only just spent a fortune on it myself. I offered to have the bike examined by the grass track dealer which Cret verbally agreed to. However I heard nothing so thought he had gone away.

Another month later on returning from holiday I found a letter from Cret's solicitor. It demanded that I pay this idiot almost the full value of the bike to have it repaired or else. The letter was poorly drafted and full of factual errors and misconceptions. It accused me of 'misrepresentation' and 'fraud' by saying in the ad. excellent condition etc. I was told the crankshaft big end had gone, ditto the head, barrel, camshaft and folliers (sic) and sundry other bits.

A long legal wrangle then persisted between my solicitor and his. ("my learned friend is mistaken"... "If my learned colleague refers to Chapter 9 Para 4.5, subsection (d), he will see"... etc etc). You probably get the idea. I received a summons from the County Court reiterating all of the above drivel. No engineers report was presented nor was I permitted to let my dealer inspect the engine at his own premises and repair it, if indeed there was a problem.

This carried on for about 2 years and by now the costs were getting out of all proportion to the value of the bike and so I agreed to pay a reduced amount to buy the bike back. Going to court would have been an option but I was in a no win situation because even if I had won in court, which I was certain of, I was told I would not have had all of my costs refunded.

I collected the bike from a dealer where Cret had left it. I'd had this arranged on the grounds that if I collected it from his house matters might have been, shall we say "unfortunate". The rolling chassis was complete but the engine was completely stripped and included bits from other engines too!

If anyone has tried a 3 dimensional jigsaw puzzle they will know an XR250 motor when they see one. It's one thing trying to assemble an engine one has taken apart but quite another to put it together if someone else has disassembled it. This is especially so without a manual (£35 to you sir plus vat. from your jolly Honda dealer). After a while this pile of bits became an engine and once back in the chassis fired up after half a dozen kicks. The cost? One gearbox sprocket oil seal and a few gaskets. I rode it around for a few months and through the snows in early '91 to check it out. No problems appeared and if the big end had gone no-one I knew could hear the characteristic knock that duff big ends create.

I sold the bike through T+MX, this time making no "representations" about condition or anything. Lots of people called and I sold it with no trouble. I explained again that I thought XR250s are a piece of crap and made the buyer sign a disclaimer. Once bitten, twice shy and all that.

So in conclusion I have had an expensive lesson, not as much as Cret though, who in believing everything that was last said to him really showed what a complete pillock he was. The proof of the pudding was in the eating on that the bike worked and although not A1 (what second hand off road bike is) was not in need of all the new parts Cret thought were required. Also Feline Bikes were looking at their profit margins as were Cret's Solicitor.

I have sworn never to buy another Honda and urge trail riders to avoid XR250s (especially early ones) like the plague. I am now a KDX freak (at least they're supposed to rattle and smoke!) and wish I had bought one years ago. Finally I would say to all sellers of bikes to be wary of unscrupulous buyers. It's not always the consumer that gets ripped off, it's sometimes the supplier.

*Steve Neville. Kent Group TRF.*



## A Sunday in South Salop...

In the true trail riding manner rain was driving down as we unloaded our bikes on the eastern flank of Titterstone Clee towards the end of September; but since we couldn't think of any adequate excuse we set off to our first lane, turning right just before Cleeton St. Mary. It's not a difficult one, but it's amazing how unsure one feels on the first rough ground of the day after a couple of month's lay off. We passed a lonely farmhouse with no sign of the tenant, nowadays friendly, but once very aggressive in the past.

One more section, short, steep and downhill, then a few miles of road over to the Brown Clee where there is a very good route up and over almost the top. Excellent views except when the cloud's down and it's driving with rain.

Our next lane near Broncroft was one I'd seen on the old maps but never tried. Roy, who was leading, had it marked, so we gave it a try. Very worthwhile, truly green, rather overgrown and with one or two fallen trees to make it interesting.

Onward, ever onward to Bembridge, where the ford was not as deep as might have been expected. The rather savage bull which is often in the field alongside was missing too, but we managed to survive the lack of excitement.

Before getting on with the next bit we had to contend with a punctured XR250 and a clutchless Kawasaki; but the rain stopped. If I had thought this would have ended my prospects of getting wet for the day, I was mistaken. Circumnavigating a very large puddle, a tree leapt out and struck my handlebars. I was forced to let the XR200 fall upside down in the water and execute an ungainly cartwheel to reach dry land with no more than a couple of wet arms and hands.

In case you feel that the tree was entirely to blame I must admit that it was he who was circumnavigating the puddle, not it.

From Broadstone we headed up a steep and slippery climb over the flank of Wenlock Edge, then on the road to Cardington where there is a couple of miles of lane to Church Stretton. The last bit is a waterfilled holloway, much easier on the XR than when I last tried it on an R80GS.

In the centre of Church Stretton, over the lights, turn first right, is a small cafe which makes dirty motorcyclists welcome, and feeds them very cheaply.

It's always a shame to leave the lunch stop, but the the call of the hills was there. In this case the Long Mynd. Up to the top, bear left then after a mile right, and down to the bottom at Stanbatch. Not particularly difficult, which is more than can be said for the climb back up again at Asterton. Nobody warned me that after the hairpin a couple of hundred yards up it gets very steep and very slippery. I ran out of power and slid back down again. Next try wasn't too bad, and I then had the pleasure of watching one or two others make a dog's breakfast of it. This climb was followed by a ridge ride to the south, then a descent to Plowden.

A couple more lanes lead us back in the direction of the farm museum at Acton Scott. Another lane at Soudley, then back to Wenlock Edge via Tickleton. Dunstan's Lane is

followed by just over a mile of first tree lined downhill, then over the main road to a deeply rutted track. I once got stuck here, held firmly underneath an XL500 with my daughter moaning about the heat coming off the exhaust. Don't see much of two up trail riding these days.

We bypassed Tickleton. Why do places have such funny names here? Who was Dunstan? A lump of mud in the face soon terminated these reveries. Thank you, fellow trail riders, for returning me to the real world.

Over towards Clee St. Margaret, and into the lane opposite the 11th Century church at the vanished village of Heath. Another puncture; this time a DR350; why can't they make these modern bikes more reliable.

Whilst the repair was made we were joined by a lone South Shropshire TRF rider. We let him come with us, and didn't once ask why his own Group had ostracised him.

This lane has a long and greasy water crossing, but nobody could be persuaded to fall in, or even crash on the rock steps which follow. One more track, then it was off to brave the Mad Woman of Clee. She lives at the start of a rather pleasant little path in a cottage which was derelict when I first rode this area, and has the second foulest mouth I've ever heard on a woman. This time she wasn't there, which disappointed one of our number who had been hoping for a competition.

Next it was up alongside Nurdy Bank fort, and over the south slope of the Brown Clee in the direction of Titterstone Clee, to a long lane onto the moorland on the north of that hill, heading for Cleeton St Margaret.

The last track of the day headed up to the tarmac below the radar station high on the hill.

It's a very sensitive area ever since idiot cowboy Motocrossers tore up acres of bog land engaging in what they, I expect, thought was harmless fun. On the other hand maybe they knew just what they were doing, and didn't care.

Anyway the result was that the commoners got rightly very upset, banned long held trials access, leaving carefully conducted trailriding as the only legitimate way of passing through; and I bet they don't even like us now.

Though I've ended my report on a rather sour note, the day's riding was a success. Roll on the winter when the rain and snow settle the dust and we get going seriously again.

*Steve Pighills. Wyvern TRF*



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## BBT Seminar...

Calne, Wilts - 8th Oct.

### Public Rights of way : limitations on users and landowners.

This was an excellent seminar which many members of the TRF would have found both useful and enjoyable and you didn't have to be a RoW officer to appreciate it either. The speakers were notable for their brevity and clarity., the case work (real cases) fascinating and the mix of group members illuminating.

Three experts shared their experience with us: Christine Willmore, Barrister, spoke on our rights and limitations in using RoW; Mark Heath, Solicitor, spoke on the duty of the local authority on RoW matters; Tim Slade, Countryside Access Manager, who spoke on the constraints placed on the use to which land can be put when it has RoW's crossing it. Each speaker constrained themselves to a thirty minute input. Following each input we moved into syndicate groups to work on six questions concerning real case studies associated with that topic; we did this for about an hour before coming back together to offer our "proposals" and hear those of the other groups before discussing the reasoning behind the real outcome. Throughout, delegates from the TRF were mixed up with horse people, walkers, wardens and landowners - in itself an extremely valuable experience - because we were exposed to each others point of view. At the end of the day time was made available for general questions.

I gained a great deal from the day, amongst the points I would wish to share would be: When the law has to be interpreted it considers what is "reasonable".

Countryside Access Managers try to emulate this (they also try to be reasonable).

Frequently Highway Authorities or similar bodies will seek professional advice from within the County Council before their meeting. All committee reports and BACKGROUND PAPERS must be available to the public three days before the meeting. It is quite possible that the advice is conflicting or that someone agrees with you, you need to know that.

Be firm, but be TACTFUL. Do not attack officials or Committees because even if you have their individual sympathy they will close ranks against you.

Lobby! Start with the back-bencher and try the opposition parties too.

Finally lots of useful contacts and significant information was learnt over chats at coffee and lunch time. I repeat, lots of useful info!

Dave Giles

*Further BBT seminars: The BBT are asking what do we want, where and when? Please give serious thought to this question and give either Tim Stevens or myself your constructive suggestions.*

## ANNUAL RIGHTS OF WAY BURSARY FUND

A bursary of £4500 has been made available immediately to run a pilot scheme from Oct 91 - Oct 92.

ADMINISTRATION Will be by a Bursary committee comprising of David Giles, Tim Ley and Richard Marshall, for rapid response. They will report on their activities at every executive meeting.

PROVISION The funds to be held in three approximately equal amounts for:

- \* National Schemes
- \* Regional Schemes
- \* Local Schemes

with provision for adjustment to the divisions in the light of experience.

GRANTS Applications for grant aid towards the cost of a RoW scheme may be made by any current member of the TRF, suitably endorsed by the local group rep' or the National RoW officer. Make your application to the Chairman, David Giles.

Applications should contain:

- \* Clear Objectives
- \* Specific Time Scales
- \* Method for monitoring success
- \* Name of the Project Manager
- \* Anticipated cost

GUIDE LINES The purpose of the Bursary is to generate RoW activity, particularly new work. The pilot scheme will be assisted by and be able to give rapid response to, projects with short time scales. So if your initiative may take some time, break it up into short units.

EXAMPLE The first application has already been received from Nottinghamshire where a BHS RoW officer in collaboration with the East Midlands TRF has agreed to do mutually beneficial research in the Records Office for the price of the duplicating costs. £50 granted.