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Roger Harris, Tel: 01539 725198  
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Richard Arscott, Tel: 01803 612950  
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### DORSET

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### EAST MIDLANDS

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### EAST SCOTLAND

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### GLOUCESTER

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### WEST SOMERSET

Geoff Pollick, Tel: 01395 232124  
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### WEST YORKSHIRE

Gordon Carr, Tel: 01535 644568  
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Lane, Halesowen

Every Thursday, 10pm, Potter's Rose & Crown, Colley  
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# TRAIL

JANUARY, 1995

No. 197

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

EDITOR: Mike "Nettlebed" Pedley.



Tim Fisher at Winster Ford in The Lakes (see page 6).

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All contributions to the Editor ..... Please keep it short and sweet!  
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*The views expressed in 'Trail' are those of its correspondents and not necessarily of the editor or the T.R.F.*

## EDITOR

Sadly, as hinted at a couple of issues ago, we start 1995 without a National Rights of Way Officer. Happy New Year!

I voiced the opinion that this was an almost unthinkable situation for any organisation claiming to be serious about RoW work. I still think that and I hope enough of you agree with me.

All may not be lost however, provided we REGIONALISE quickly!

Many Groups have already done so and elected RoW Officers for their particular Region.

Our next Executive meeting is on February 25th and it is ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL that each Region sends at least one representative to that meeting who will be able to inform the meeting of the name of their RoW man (or woman)..

This is serious stuff, fellow Trail Riders. We must keep up the good work albeit in a slightly different form to our predecessors!

The Exec. meeting is of course at the Motorcycle Museum and you do not need to pay to attend. Be there and help get the TRF on a firm footing for 1995!

Ideally we still need a name to fill the RoW Co-ordinator's post. Members should not fear putting their name forward. Yes it will involve some commitment but many of you have the ability. Don't forget, it's not for a lifetime, just one year and I promise you there will be help if you need it.

Personally I still think we should be moving towards some sort of remuneration for this essential post. Think of your favourite lane. If you suddenly found you were to lose it how much would it be worth to you personally to keep it? Our Annual membership fee is a pittance compared to what many others pay to their hobby - it wouldn't for example pay your entry fee in a club-level motocross and you would have to pay that every week not just once a year! I would guess that it's because we can ride for free that we begrudge paying a decent amount. Perhaps the same thinking applies to those who we choose to call 'cowboys'. They give us a bad name with their 'illegal antics because they won't pay to ride in motocross when they don't have to! Controversial? Good, write and tell me about it - we desperately need more articles!

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## GROUP NEWS

### KENT GROUP REPORT - DECEMBER 1994

Kent is stuck down in the corner of the country between the big Smoke and nearer to France than Yorkshire, therefore often forgotten by those oop t'north; but we have a surprising number of Green Lanes. Most of these are real Byways with acknowledged vehicular rights not dual status bridleway/UCR's that exist in many parts of the country.

This is not to say there are no problems. We were fortunate enough to stop a TRO on the Pilgrims Way/North Downs Way at Wrotham from the arrogant NIMBYism of local residents. The problem was local youths on motocross bikes using the lane as a practice track. Eventually Kent County Council (KCC) and the local community realised the problem was caused by their own offspring and not responsible vehicle user groups. Action will be for the Police to sort out the MXers, KCC put up Unsuitable for Motors signs and surface part of the lane to reduce mud entrainment. It's a pity they could not have done this for Shorehill Lane down the road in Kemsing where a local petition closed a nice green lane. A JP lives at one end ... nuff said!

KCC is working on its review of RUPPs from the east to the west and we have supplied a list of what we believe to be vehicular RUPPs to the reclassification officers. We successfully objected to one bridleway reclassification on Well Penn Road (RS84a) and KCC has now published a Byway order. Thatchers Lane which adjoins this has just been regraded Byway from Footpath following a map error during the Special Review.

During 1994 the hard core of the Kent TRF (you know the usual "few") surveyed a huge number of Byways and RUPPs in Kent for KCC. Survey forms were sent for their own database and condition survey. I have extracted the relevant data to compile our own computer database, which those who attended the AGM will have seen. Those interested in statistics may be interested in the following figures:

Footpath	3569 miles
Bridleway	664 miles
Byway	150 miles
RUPPs/UCR	110 miles approximately

A Rambler in Kent is like a "cochon dans la merde" and one wonders why the RA makes so much fuss about the relatively few green lanes we really have. It's not so good for horses though and I am keen that KCC should have more circular rides on bridleways, or upgrade a few footpaths maybe?

There are eight TROs in place with one being a car only TRO next to Canada Heights MX circuit. Two have been in place since 1963 (MR200/209), one since 1967 (SD73) and another since about 1973 (AE36). It was with great satisfaction that I pointed out to KCC that it was in the wrong place! They moved it so we can now use the lane to link another Byway near Chilham (AE25). Others are on Steeds Lane and another Byway (AE550) because of a new bypass (the A2070).

Other fun includes the odd diversion and soon the Channel Tunnel Rail link will be rearing it's ugly head. Scotland Lane near Cobham is under threat and we are going to ensure it gets a Byway bridge.

'94 has seen us do seven horse events (again by "the few") which are usually good fun and gives us a chance to ride places we cannot normally go. It's also a nice way to give some positive PR.

Steve Neville

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## HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Please refer to the front cover picture which is related to this article.

The front cover picture is of myself at Winster Ford in The Lakes, Grid Ref: S O 413 919. The picture below was also taken at Winster Ford, but approximately 65 years ago in around 1930. This old photo is part of an album belonging to my late Grandfather, who was a very keen and successful motorcyclist of his day (I have some of his trophies to prove it). He was born in 1900 and I guess he was about 28-30 ish when these photos were taken hence the estimate of 1930.

It's interesting to note that as the trees have changed a lot, the only change to the footbridge is the addition of a hand rail. I hope you find this ancient and modern combination interesting.

*Tim Fisher, Cumbria*



## RoW NEWS

### THE GAP, BRECON

The proposed TRO was withdrawn at Powys Council in December. It may yet be pursued but the pressure finally got through and the expectation is that a meeting between the Council and user representatives will be convened before long to reconsider the justification.

### COUNTRYSIDE FORUM - CARDIFF

#### "GETTING IT RIGHT FOR THE FUTURE"

A second annual conference is to be held in the Sports Council for Wales buildings in Cardiff on Sunday 29th January. Speakers are from a County Council, off-road Police, Forest Enterprise, Tim Stevens, Caroline Garfield and Forum Members with map expertise. All welcome (at no charge) but ring Bill Kershaw on 01633 895241 as soon as possible so that adequate food is available for the buffet lunch.

## WHY A TLR 200?

After owning a DR350 trail bike for just over a year, I was beginning to say to myself this bike is too big, too tall, too heavy, too noisy, and too expensive to run. It was a beautiful bike but I was finding it just a bit too much 'overkill' for trail riding even though I did do a lot of alterations to suit me.

You can probably gather from this that I fancied a change, and when I saw an ad for a Honda TLR200 road legal trials, trail bike, I thought to myself this would be the bike for me as I have always had an interest in trials machines. Being a little light weight 200cc bike and selling for a very good price new (£1999 on the road) a deal was struck!

I sold the DR for a good price and promptly went and bought my TLR. I rode the bike back from the shop and immediately noticed how small and low the bike was. It had a very smooth engine compared to an enduro type bike.

My TLR is a 1987 model that was brought into the UK by a dealer who bought a batch in the States that had not sold very well over there. Apparently they are selling very well in the UK, especially to the twin shock boys.

When you buy the bike it is fully road legal with 12V electrics, large street lights, indicators, mirrors, battery, tool box, speedo with indicator panel and ignition switch. As the bike stands new it is fine for trail riding if that is what you want! But for me a few alterations had to take place as I intend to do a few trials with it. I have stripped all the street gear off it and replaced them with small trials lights, speedo, alloy bars, and Pirelli MT43 trials tyres have been fitted as the standard Dunlops do not grip very well in the mud. I have left the gearing standard (13F 44R) as it is just about right for trail riding. I think for trials the gearing would have to go down on the front sprocket

to give extra pull for trials sections. All the street fittings came to 9kg, so the bike is now about 90kg in weight. The fuel tank holds 6.5 litres of petrol which means a range of about 100 miles because the bike is so thrifty on the fuel. The engine is a treat, very quiet, and has a very smooth 6 speed box. Regular oil changes (1 Litre!) should mean it will last a long time. Also the bike is easy to start (this is a major move forward for ex-DR350 owners!).

So onto riding Green Lanes and the road. On the road it moves along very nicely and will top 70mph. The small seat is well padded for my bott! The exhaust is quiet which is a real help when horses are about. On the lanes the suspension is very good as there is a good amount of travel in the rear end for a trials bike. This bike likes to be ridden slow, and is a pleasure to ride slowly with my feet up! The tyre pressures need to be lowered for grip in mud and on climbs. The front end is nice and light and it can be lofted upwards to clear any obstacles easily. It rides well in ruts. The air filter is well sealed for water crossings and even the drum brakes work well, even when wet!

And it scoots along nicely on open moorland. And so there you have it. For trail riding and a few clubman trials, I now have a tasty little bike.

*Richard Coyne, Bristol Group*

## TRAIL RIDING IN FRANCE

Well, I bet it was more fun than your average dirty weekend, trail riding in the Massif Central region of France over the Easter Holiday! Having ranted on for the last year how good it was trail riding in Normandy, it didn't take much persuasion to get a friend with a dirt bike to join the West Midlands Group of the TRF, who were organising the event, and find room for my KMX200 in the back of his van.

A previous force 9 experience made the Portsmouth to Caen night crossing in force 7 winds pretty unremarkable, though our 'rest' (sleep was impossible) was frequently disturbed by other occupants' chairs sliding them unceremoniously at great speed across the bar towards us as the boat tilted at a worrying angle. There was unmistakable evidence (complete with the obligatory diced carrots) that some found the conditions unsettling, but I was pleased to find that a combination of lying completely still, sea-bands, lager and travel pills left me well able to face sharing some of the driving on the 350 mile journey south to Peyrat-le-Chateau (not far from Limoges), our base for the next 4 days.

About half the 18 or so members opted for the luxury of a hotel in the village (where we spent most of our evenings sampling well earned drinks) and the rest of us tougher types camped about 10 minutes walk away on the municipal campsite beside the river.

On arrival however it appeared the site (recommended by a small party who'd come down the summer before for a 'reccy') was normally open only from June - September. It was typical of the French attitudes we encountered that the site was opened especially for us (by a concerned and friendly chap who we gathered was the mayor), something which would be unlikely to happen in England. The whole

outlook of most of the French people we met was very obliging and positive - instead of folk giving you hassle over rights of way, they tell you the best routes, rush out to wave, and are generally very biker-friendly. And this was true of those we encountered in Normandy too, so I don't think it's just local tolerance brought about by the staging in this region of the Gilles Lalay Enduro in February.

As a consequence of some Franglais conversation in the bar, two impromptu afternoon runs were led by French riders, one the hotel manager Serge, the other afterwards christened Jean-Pierre 'le rapide' through his riding style and want of adequate translation to learn his name.

We didn't have to range far from the village to use a variety of green lanes, many through woodland and timber plantation giving loads of thick wet mud hiding slippery roots to catch me out. There were mountain 'roads' of loose gravel, the occasional rocky stream bed, climbs on mud and rock - all fairly tricky, with one impossible uphill section after a stream up slime covered steps and boulders, where most of us ended up pushing each bike, and one vertical downhill where we walked them down, engines off in gear, one step at a time with an anchor person hanging on the back - interesting stuff.

When the weather cleared (rarely) views were remarkable and though the mountains aren't spectacular, as the whole area is a high plateau, there were lakes, buzzards in abundance, wild flowers, a mountain top sculpture trail and timeless rural French scenes with beautiful unkempt farm buildings - lots to thrill the eye when you could safely take it from the immediate hazards in front.

Compared with England the amount of road riding between lanes was minimal and many tracks are marked with colour coded bands, however one could virtually wander at will through comparatively deserted countryside. With less of the historical feudal landowner culture our kind of fun if refreshingly hassle free.

I'd highly recommend the scenery, the chocolate, the trails, the wine, the coffee, but NOT the weather at this time of year (Easter) - snow, hail, sleet, rain - you name it, it fell, and then froze on the tent at night! Challenging riding though to keep you warm through the day, and all in all a very enjoyable experience.

As I write this I'm sipping a delicious French wine - one of the advantages of travelling with bikes in vans - plenty of available space between bikes, even between tyre and mudguard, for crates of wine and chocolate to last till the next time (no chance!).

*Jacky Williams, Gloucester Group*

## \* \* notice \* \*

The first South East Regional Meeting is on Saturday 18th February 1995, the venue is the Crown Inn, West Cott, Dorking, Surrey on the A25 commencing at midday. For further information please ring Brian Read on 0181 660 9620.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION - THE MOTORCYCLE SOLUTION IGNORED

Sir John Horton's Royal Commission report on Environmental Pollution has completely ignored motorcycles as part of the solution, even though it acknowledges that their contribution to the problem of pollution is negligible.

In the 330 page report, motorcycles do not even appear in the index and their only mention is in tables of emissions where motorcycles are shown to have a negligible contributory effect.

In response the BMF have issued the following statement. "After two years work it is deplorable that the commission has completely overlooked the benefits of the motorcycle as a practical alternative to cars and public transport. Not only are all motorcycles intrinsically more environmentally friendly, requiring less raw material and less energy to manufacture them, they also require less road and parking space. Further, the smaller commuter type motorcycle achieving over 100mpg is economical and produces both negligible emissions and noise pollution. Even high performance machines achieve figures of 45/50mpg and still require less resources and road space".

These points will again be reiterated to Transport Secretary Dr. Brian Mawhinney.

## BRITISH PARLIAMENT SUPPORTS THE MOTORCYCLISTS CASE

Following an unprecedented debate in Parliament today, the House of Commons voted in favour of a Government motion opposing both the 74kw power limit and anti-tampering proposals presently under discussion by the EU.

Letters had been sent by the BMF to 140 MPs known to have an interest in motorcycling matters in order that the motion would get support. In introducing the debate however, Transport Minister Steven Norris made it clear that the motion also said that motorcycles should not get preferential treatment over other vehicles on noise and emission limits.

A further part of the motion opposed the European Parliament's attempt to seek a role in 'comitology', the process of amending legislation presently controlled by Commissioners and the Council of Ministers.

Thought to be as much to do with the Governments relations with the EU Parliament as to the rights of the arguments, the BMF nevertheless welcomes this move to bring in the British Parliament as yet another weapon in the fight against unnecessary and discriminatory motorcycle legislation.

## A FATAL STROKE FOR TWO STROKES?

Following last month's (November) debate in Parliament on Motorcycle Type Approval, the BMF has revealed information on legislation that could signal the early death of the two stroke motorcycle. This is despite a statement to the contrary by Transport Minister Stephen Norris that: "the motorcycle industry has advised the

Department that the proposals (on emission levels) can be met either by existing technology or by engine modifications ... catalytic converters will not be necessary".

This statement conflicts with a report from the EU Motor Vehicle Emissions Group in March 1992, predicting increased manufacturing costs due to the need for two strokes to be fitted WITH catalytic converters. (This is to meet the 4 grammes per kilometre limit for unburned hydrocarbons set out in Stage 2 of the Multi Directive).

The same report goes on to predict that as a result, retail prices would increase by 10% to 25%, warning that a 25% increase to the customer is, "sufficient for a manufacturer to delete the model from his catalogue".

The BMF is concerned that confusion over the different technical measures required for four strokes and two strokes to meet emission levels, will result in legislation being enacted erroneously that will, through price increases alone, effectively kill off the simple two stroke powered two wheeler.

The BMF see this as not only damaging the very roots of motorcycling by removing many entry level machines from the market place, but also as indicative of the often ill informed debate that applies to motorcycle legislation.

The BMF have written to the Department of Transport clarifying the position and asking them to oppose the proposals but will also be pursuing the matter through the FEM.

N.B. Proposals for emissions contained within the EU Multi-Directive on Motorcycle Type Approval are in three stages. The first sets achievable standards for modern four strokes, while granting concessionary limits for lightweight motorcycles.

The second stage, due next year, will lower levels to the current Swiss limits and TERMINATE the concession for lightweight motorcycles.

The third stage, due in 1998, reduces emission levels to those of the 1994 limit for cars and TERMINATES concessionary limits for two strokes.

In practice however Stage 2 will kill off the two stroke because the emission levels will not be achievable without sophisticated catalytic converters. Termination of concessions under Stage 3 will therefore be irrelevant.

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## VEHICLES LEAVE WALKERS FUMING

### A Dales '94 Cutting

People enjoy the countryside in many different ways. But an activity that is fun for some might be viewed less positively by others. Off-road use of motor vehicles is particularly controversial.

The network of paths and ways in the Yorkshire Dales measures some 2000 kilometres. They form a valuable recreational asset for both local people and visitors.

Walkers consider themselves to be the 'traditional' users of the countryside, but they now no longer have it to themselves, if indeed they ever did. They might be sharing routes with horseriders, cyclists, motorcyclists, farm vehicles and even people taking rough country 4x4 trips.

#### SCENERY

Only on footpaths are walkers alone with the scenery. Bridleways are used by horseriders, mountain bikers and walkers while on byways and other green lanes, these and farm and recreational motor traffic all jostle for their own space.

This can lead to ill feeling between different users. The main controversy seems to centre on whether motorised vehicles should be allowed on off-road routes in quiet countryside in a national park purely for recreation. Many walkers feel that the peace and isolation that they seek on the fells is shattered by motorcycle trail riders or four wheel drive vehicles. In most cases, nevertheless, these people are merely exercising their rights and enjoying their own form of countryside recreation.

Sometimes the picture is more clouded. Rae Lonsdale, Access and Recreation Officer for the National Park, explains: "On some off-road routes it is not legally clear exactly what sort of use is allowed. This is because the Definitive Maps drawn up in the 50s and 60s to record rights of way usually did not take account of vehicular rights.

"The National Park Authority is now trying to put this situation right by making orders to add byways to the maps. There are many routes which might be claimed as vehicular highways that are either not shown on the Definitive Map or are shown as footpaths and bridleways".

This confusion often exacerbates the ill feeling that can arise between different types of users. And of course illegal unauthorised use takes place too. There are signs that irresponsible motorcyclists use routes where there is no question of motor rights. This type of misuse probably represents a small minority.

Official off-road motoring organisations promote considerate use and have codes of conduct for their members to follow in order to inflict minimal damage on the environment and disturbance to other users.

#### ONE SIDE OF THE STORY BY ALAN KIND - "REASONABLE TO SHARE"

"Four wheel drives and motorcycles cause damage to green roads!" say the headlines. Well, yes, they do. But so do walkers, horses, mountain bikes, shooters, tractors, lack of even basic maintenance, every hard winter and the simple passage of time. Green roads themselves were created by damage to virgin ground by hooves and wheels.

"Motor vehicles have no place on roads originally made for horse and horse carriages!". Well, that would mean that motor vehicles could not use about 90 per cent of the tarmac-surfaced routes in Britain as these all date back before the coming of the motor car. It could equally be said that recreational walkers have no place on highways that developed as commercial arteries. Society changes and highway use evolves.

"Four wheel drives are inappropriate in national parks!". We would not argue against overuse being a bad thing, but the low steady and generally sustainable level of recreational vehicle use, on just a few highways, cannot offend other than the most unreasonable? There is 225,000 kilometres of unmade highway in England and Wales that vehicles have no right of access to. Is it so unreasonable that walkers, horseriders and cyclists should share just 8000 kilometres with the occasional private motor vehicle?

#### THE OTHER SIDE BY ALISTAIR FERGUSON - "INTRUSION ON THE FELLS"

As one who has enjoyed the quiet splendours of the fells in the north west of the national park for over 50 years, the noisy and environmentally damaging intrusion of motor bikes and four wheel drive vehicles onto our old drove roads and even bridleways can only be abhorrent.

Whilst most drivers try to be considerate to walkers in as much as they slow down when passing to avoid mud splattering, they still leave behind a trail of tyre tracks and puddles. The Occupation Road above Dentdale is now so damaged that it is virtually unwalkable after wet weather.

In this crowded island opportunities for the quiet enjoyment of beautiful scenery and the fauna that inhabit it are becoming rarer. Ever increasing motor traffic is already making our road system more congested than hitherto. Surely it is reasonable to plead that our green lanes be kept traffic free for the benefit of the vast majority who believe that the secret places of the high fells should only be revealed to those who go on foot or cycle?

Farmers must, of course, have vehicle access to their land but otherwise no motorbikes or four wheel drives should be run off the tarmac roads within the national park.

*Alistair Ferguson attended Sedbergh School and lives in Dent leading guided walks for summer visitors.*

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## LETTERS

### REVIEW

Have you ever had a precious Ordnance Survey map ripped to shreds by the wind or turned by the rain into that ghastly sort of mush sometimes passed off as chips in Lancashire? Over the years I have tried various solutions. Covering the thing in Transpaseal works quite well, but the finished result is so unwieldy that you have to roll, rather than fold, it into a manageable size. Spraying with TexNik (a sort of waxoyl for tents) gives a very water resistant surface, but it can still tear either over time, or in a strong wind. And the fumes! Don't be surprised if the Drug Squad pops round after you've sprayed a couple of Landrangers.

Most people seem to stick with the tried and tested map case. These are alright, but would be better if they were not cut like a Scotsman's wallet. I've ripped brand new maps getting them in, let alone fighting to refold in the wind and rain on the top of Walna Scar.

Salvation may be at hand in the form of a new commercial map encapsulating service I recently spotted mentioned in the Daily Telegraph of all places (well, it must have some uses). I asked the manufacturer, Chartech, for an example of Landranger 86 to try out in the field. This arrived looking rather like a home Transpasealed sheet, but on closer examination it is a very much better job. The map (a bog-standard Landranger) is folded in half horizontally, the two halves seemingly glued together, then the whole shooting match is encapsulated in a flexible clear plastic which also seems to be stuck to the face of the map. I got it good and wet and it didn't leak, but I have not yet used it long enough to test the wear rate of the folds (it folds into the original format, but does not pack as flat).

Yes, you say, but what about all the information that a real green road user needs? Well, the beauty of the system Chartech use is that you can write on the plastic with a soft pencil, and clean this off later with household spray polish, or - and this is good - Chartech will encapsulate your own marked-up OS map for you, as long as you do not use a wax-based marker. They tell me that Stabilos or Pentels and similar markers will not bleed.

The cost is reasonable when you consider that a new Landranger is nudging the £5 mark these days. Any Landranger or Pathfinder is £8.95 (they also do those weird ones with yellow covers) and your own map can be treated for £5 including return postage. At the last count I had 6 copies of Landranger 86 on my shelves in varying states of decomposition ranging from well thumbed down to goodwill within the BMF Management Committee. I just can't bear to throw them out when you think of how many miles they have covered. I certainly think that for areas where rights of way information is lacking on the standard OS, but not likely to change much (sheet 98 is an obvious example) the Chartech model could prove to be an investment.

Chartech are at Eccles House, Telebusiness Centre, Eccles Lane, Hope, Sheffield, S30 2RW, Tel: 01433 621779, Fax: 01433 621776.

*Sent in by Alan Kind*

### A BELATED CHRISTMAS WISH

Dear Santa, I think for this Christmas I'd like,  
A pair of new tyres to suit my trail bike,  
Oh, and if you have room and I'm not being a pain,  
Some more marked up maps, with all legal lanes.  
Please don't you forget what I asked for last year,  
A complete smart new set of tough, waterproof gear.

Dear Santa, I need boots to keep dry in the rain,  
But boots tough enough to protect me from pain.  
And a helmet that fits me would be really great,  
To replace the old white one I cadged from my mate.  
Perhaps you might think I'm too greedy by far,  
But it's all really vital when you don't ride on tar.

And last but not least, I will ask for no more,  
As you head off again towards Greenland's shore,  
Please help all the councils to see things my way,  
When reclassifying RUPPs, they make them all BYWAY.

*The Derbyshire Bard*

### HONDA 6593 PF

It is not often that I stir from my honorary slumbers, but Paul Atherton comments in Trail 194 on the 1971 Bike article, and asks the question about Honda 6593 PF. Well I can advise that it is still owned and often used though I doubt if it is on Green Lanes by Ron who lives in North London and often seen on the Honda Owners Club stand at various old bike events. Whilst I have forgotten his surname, I first met him in the Wood Green Club in the late fifties, he bought the bike new in the early sixties, I think 1962. He was a member of the TRF in the early days. If any more details are required give me some time and I will endeavour to make contact.

Please give my regards to all who were around a few years ago and all success to the present team. I don't do much trail riding these days owing to re-occurring back troubles though I very occasionally get one of my Cubs out (Triumph not Honda) but the effect of the ride is remembered long after the enjoyments have been forgotten. I know more modern machinery is less of a problem but I have the Cubs along with other old bikes. Whilst on the subject of old bikes I often meet a former (I nearly said old) Secretary of the TRF Bob Shilling who also campaigns an old bike but like me, only on the flat and hopefully smooth.

*S. Moss, Chingford, London*

### NOSTALGIA?

Paul Atherton's letter about my first Ridgeway Ride brought memories flowing back. Yes there was strange machinery, but it was all that we had, and if you think a



Tri/Greeves heavy you are mistaken. If you compare actual weights I think you will find it no heavier than an XR250 Honda than a DR800 - and Dick Sutton - Pen y Bont 200 - can probably still make one to your order. Also on the ride were John Ebbrell road testing a Bultaco Sherpa for Motor Cycle Weekly (There's no room for any more magazines - was his opinion of Mark Williams proposed new "Bike" magazine - the weeklies have it sewn up!) There were two ladies - one a nurse Deborah Rose riding a Brough and Heather MacGregor - later to be voted Miss BMF 197? and now knitting in Leamington Spa, if you want a TRF knitted hat or scarf .. The Honda twin with the hi level pipes was Ron Kemp and I think he still owns it, from North London. The chief perpetrator from North London was Brian Catt - editor of the magazine and Wrig (Ernie Wrigley) main instigator of the TRF. Also in the group of people who started and probably finished were Ron Amey of Amey Roadstone Concrete and his riding friend - probably the most likely owner of the Enfield, although I think they were on Plumstead machinery. There was a machine from Swindon that took the gearbox out into a nice little hole on a rock, who rode home slowly.

All the above leaves one machine unaccounted for - well I think you were unkind to the Vespa. It had wide tyres, a low centre of gravity, light weight (to lift if necessary) and good torque at low revs. Okay, on the debit side are a low slung silencer and low ground clearance but imagine getting a puncture - no problem, just bolt on the spare wheel. I had the machine for ten years and travelled

from Narvik and Helsinki to Prague and Vienna on it and several Dragon Rallies including one return without a clutch cable!. So I know what it would do and yes it was so desirable someone stole it soon after. So the secret is out - it was me riding it - and no-one who knows me sartorially would accuse me of being a "mod" and I still seem to be involved in various ways with the Fellowship, having been Membership Secretary, Editor and Secretary in the intervening years. If you can send me a photocopy of the article I may be able to identify other riders. Oh and Mark Williams posted the magazine on the office franking machine for some years, that saved money for Norman C. Smith's Rights of Way campaign. Fellow Loddon Vale member Colin Patient has been in the TRF longer than me but must have been working on that day. Happy Riding.

*John R. Higgin, Hants.*

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## 1994 SOUTH WEST HORSE EVENTS

This year I have, with various TRF members, taken part in 15 horse events. I have cancelled our help at three events who failed to give adequate notice or route and other details at what I considered too late notice.

Two charity rides were to be undertaken as a PR gesture. One of them I had to cancel because confirmation of the event was given only 6 days in advance. The one we did complete. Alan Quinney and I did on our own as no other volunteers were available. Although we refused payment, dedicating it to the charity the organisers still insisted on giving us a big box of chocolates and bottles of wine each as a token of their appreciation.

At all rides except Golden Horseshoe the donation towards our expenses has been shared evenly among the volunteers. At Horseshoe the sum was sent to volunteers own group funds. It has come to my notice that there is talk that financial donations should be sent to the TRF at national level. Two years ago it was a mutual decision by other event volunteers and myself to divide the donation towards our expenses. Those among you who have taken part in a horse event will of course realise that our expenses outweigh the donation received, however we do not do it for the financial gain. We all get a lot of satisfaction and pleasure from taking part and indeed have a good social time with horse riders and organisers alike.

Several times I have been asked by TRF officials what the TRF get out of horse

events. Firstly the majority of horse event riders now know about the TRF and what we do. Many event organisers are being made more aware of the dangers of using permissive routes as opposed to RoW. Certainly one ride this year took in 2 bridleways which the landowners have frightened locals from using. This organiser sought advice from myself and Peter Banks as to her rights. She intends using both these bridleways again in next years ride, so yes we are getting the message through. I have had a request during this winter to help plan new routes for new rides using RoW networks as opposed to National Parks. The person who has requested this help is a high official with BHS who has just taken early retirement to dedicate more time to BHS horse events on the planning side. Most months I write an

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article for the BHS or EHPS magazine and have in these columns been educating the average rider to think RoW and preserving the network, mingled in with comments on rides and humorous snippets.

My opinion is that we are doing a good PR exercise whilst enjoying ourselves and the scenery. This year it has been a struggle at times to find enough volunteers for the normal events, whilst being inundated with requests from our members wishing to attend Golden Horseshoe. Next year I intend putting names into a hat of members who have helped at three or more events to decide on Golden Horseshoe. Personally I have enjoyed some of the smaller events the most, there is less pressure and generally the event is more 'laid back'.

*Norman Howard, Dorset*

### **T.L.G. (THE LARGE GROUP)**

I was particularly interested to read 'Self Flagellation', Trail no. 193 regarding T.L.G. (The Large Group). I have witnessed T.L.G. on an approximately annual basis since 1974 generally in the Yorkshire Dales. It would be a fair assumption to suggest that Mr. Parker has sighted the same species. As recently as March this year I met up with some trail riding friends at Hellifield Cattle Market. Feeling large at six (due to one friend bringing a friend) we reluctantly offered the hand of hospitality to a young man on a KMX125 who was unable to locate the group of trail riders

he was also supposed to meet at Hellifield. We trundled towards Hellifield Moor turning left towards Settle when, having a chat at a gate, we heard the distant 'buzz' of fellow motorcyclists. As they approached a helmet count confirmed T.L.G. and our newcomer, recognising 'his group' thanked us for our hospitality. The only trail bike in this group was a Suzuki SP370/400 who seemed distinctly disinterested in joining our group. XT350 (2), KMX200 (1), BMW R80GS (3). T.L.G. disappeared as quickly as they had appeared, three/four abreast, rat tails just visible through the two stroke fog. Was it A.K. who stated 'we only have the right to traverse the surface crust?'

'Sponsored Bungee Jumping' by C.R. Poll in the same mag issue, quote, "I hit an extremely large boulder in the middle of

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the track at full throttle in second gear" prompts me to question what trail riding is - or should be about. Well almost time to sign off and put all the washing on the line.

No chinguard (helmet), no body armour, no flash gear, no knobbles, no noise, no large groups. Total road legality. Is it time to be counted?

I do know the members (well certainly a few individuals) of the T.L.G. but 'mums' the word. A club will always be different things to different people but my interpretations of trail riding seem to be leading me towards a minority element within the club.

*Bob Mc.Connell, Otley, West Yorkshire*

### **LIFE AFTER THEFT**

It is nearly a year since some black hearted thief broke into my alarmed garage and took away my trusty XR250. The space has been filled with a dismantled Ariel Leader which has taken up my time and money. I now fancy a change and would like something a little different. I nearly captured a one owner 1970's MZ ISDT (International Six Days Trials, not enduros in those days!) but it escaped. Also I tried to buy a Cheney Triumph ISDT replica but was too late.

Classic Bike magazine carried a report on a Cotton Triumph which looks as if it will fit my wants but is a little expensive. This is a 1960's Cotton frame with a 5TA parallel twin of around 30BHP or a Daytona engine with 40BHP on tap for the hairy chested. At 275lb it cannot be described as svelte but it weighs a lot less than my first trail bike a Suzuki SP370 of 15 years ago. It has 10ins of ground clearance and is relatively low tech. No disc brakes or hydraulics, no radiator to worry about and no complex suspension linkages to go wrong. It can be built as a kit or as a fully assembled bike on a "Q" reg plate as it uses new and old components.

Does anyone use one of these to go trail riding? I remember Geoff Bostock riding a Triumph on one of our Northumbrian weekends. Apparently this was a slightly modified road bike! He never seemed to get stuck even on the awesome Salter's Road in the Cheviots. I would be grateful if anyone could give me a ring and either fan the flames of desire or throw a cold bucket on the idea of a non-Jap trail bike.

*Dave Vaughan, Sunderland, Tel: 091 548 7620*

### **TRAIL RIDING IN SWEDEN**

I have a Swedish friend, a colleague in a previous job. We'd discussed a few times what was the best motorcycle to acquire for trail riding, since he was tempted by my descriptions of British exploits. With only a little knowledge of what might amount to trail riding in Sweden my suggestion was a Honda XR250, and after a short temptation to go for an XR600 it was the 250 he picked.

A couple of months ago he invited me to combine a business visit to Volvo in Sweden - Volvo Truck Corporation, not the motorcyclist's demon, Volvo Cars - with a taste of Swedish trail riding.

On a very hot weekend in August I made it. A flight to Gothenborg, a three hour car journey, and we were close to his summer house in the middle of Sweden, way out in the forest and a long way from tarmac. To complete the last thirty kilometres, I had to ride the 1979 XT500 he had arranged to borrow from a friend, trying to keep up with the car in the gathering dusk. Even on an easy dirt road you can detect the advances fifteen years of motor cycle technology have brought.

My accomodation was a hut at the bottom of the garden with all mod. cons. even if some, like the shower (hot), were outside in the trees, naturist style.

This area of Sweden, fifty years ago, was covered in small farms, consisting of a few fields for stock to graze, and to provide hay for the long snowy winter, plus some forest to work. Now the farmers have gone, and their inheritors use the farms as out of town housing or summer accomodation. The forest is fighting back and winning. The main roads are gravel, but many of the routes which linked the farms are barely distinguishable tracks through the trees. It's rather like Grisedale or the Wyre Forest, but goes on for kilometre after kilometre, an endless mixture of birch or pine forest, small open fields and unspoilt lakes. We rode for a day and a half without coming across tarmac.

My navigation in the UK is pretty good, but the contortions of our route through the trees, and the pronunciation of the place names, soon lost me here. I had expected it to be pretty unchallenging, but the combination of the old, nearly lost,

farm roads through the trees, and the XT500, solved that problem. Apart from the faintest of signs of clearance through the trees there was very little to guide us, though I guess a Swede can read a trail through the trees with the same unerring certainty a Welshman can cross the Monks Trod in the mist.

This was just about the first time Claes had had anyone to ride with, trail riders being thin on the ground in Sweden, so he was able to be a bit more adventurous than usual. We managed quite a few steep climbs, found some mud from the nightly thunder storms and sweated a lot in the high temperature and humidity. One thing we saw nothing of was erosion, the few users of the paths have only the summer to walk or ride, and the power of regeneration outweighs the effect of a few travellers. In a few

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months the area will be covered with snow, and the only things moving will be moose and the moose hunters.

On the occasions when we swapped, and I rode the XR250, it was like getting on a magic carpet, but the trials riding height and the torque of the XT reminded me of my rather similar Honda XL500, which I enjoyed until my common sense, and my fellow riders' threats to stop helping me pick it up and restart it, pushed me in the direction of small, light XR200's, etc.

So, what should one make of Swedish trail riding. There are more tracks to ride than we could dream of in the UK, and no equivalent of the Country Landowners or Ramblers Associations objecting, but also no concept of trail riding organization and research as in the UK, and maybe not enough people to sustain such a process. It's the complete opposite problem, thousands of kilometres just disappearing back into the wilderness, not being artificially removed by a process of redefinition of the map under the pressure of land owners and other users.

The evidence that the roadworks of man can soon be undone by nature made me happy I was causing no harm to the landscape. As we know, but many other countryside enthusiasts would wish to deny, it is not one particular type of user who causes harm, lasting or otherwise. It is the general pressure of overuse, and if it were true that the elimination of trail riding would encourage the growth of other activities then maybe our presence is actually a good thing!

*Steve Pighills, Wyvern & Black Country Groups*

## A QUESTION OF SUSPENDERS

Now that I have your attention, the question is more of how to save that rather large hump that you are expecting your bike to encounter from causing you untold damage to your nether regions.

Most of the people that I have ridden on green lanes with, have been owners of Jap machines or Japanese suspension units. But those of us who have wanted to replace those worn out shocks have for quite a time had the vast choice of OEM, French, British, Italian, Swedish, Dutch, Taiwan, (Far East) and American to name the majority. Anybody who is in the market for new suspenders, the main criteria is one of cost - the cheapest (and the worst) are the Far East R & R shocks - the best (and the most expensive) being Ohlins. Others with more requirements may well go for shocks with adjustable pre-load along with compression and rebound adjustment, with full rebuild potential, priced accordingly.

With this in mind I contacted TRF member Peter who works for that well known company M. R. HOLLAND, the suspender specialists that did well out of selling S & W components (shocks, springs, valves, valve guides) but now known as Progressive Suspension (P.S.). I have read in quite a number of Yank mags that FOX racing, with their twin clickers are another quality product and that P.S. have risen from the S & W mould. So I asked Peter if there was an application for my trusty old

XL250s in the front fork department. Several days later a parcel arrived and soon after arriving home from work I had a new pair of fork springs, a comprehensive list of instructions, and hey presto no more strange handling antics. The instructions were easy to follow, installation as easy as taking out old springs, checking oil level under full compression was equal in both legs, and reinstalling new springs and fork caps. Should the seals have gone this would have been an ideal opportunity to change to new seals and fresh quality oil (PJ1, Silkolene, Rock Oil, Kal-Gard, etc.).

The difference was surprising to say the least. Small irregularities did not send judders through the steering and the progressively wound spring increases its spring rate as the spring compresses. Should I have replaced old oil and seals at the time the difference would have been more dramatic - the old wallow from the front end over 100mph had gone and the fork dive diminished when both discs were applied.

M R HOLLAND did not have any fork springs for the standard XL250SA so I might graft on the KLR600 front end that I have around the garage and fit P.S. springs to these - meantime it has transformed the EXUP

Other Progressive Suspension goodies that I have had around the workshop have been put to good use for many years. The fork oil level syringe and pocket air pump that I picked up in Switzerland are typical of P.S. quality.

A quick call to M R HOLLAND (number in TRAIL) will secure a comprehensive list of all shocks, springs, etc. available for that XR, DR, WR, IT, KDX, etc. application.

Tim Gooderson, Kent

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### CONCERN OVER RoW OFFICER

Like most of you I'm very concerned you can't find a National Rights of Way Officer.

Please remember that the strength and prestige and success of the TRF is its rights of way performance and expertise which in some areas is second only to the RA. If I can give any advice or help to prospective volunteers, write or phone me on 0191 267 3686. I took on the job as the First National RoW Officer in 1975 and left in 1989 to become a full time county council rights of way officer at the ripe old age of 51. So you see it CAN pay off! The TRF is very fortunate in only needing 2 since 1975. Continuity in this job is important; Tim will confirm that as will all group RoW Officers! If you want

someone for the job in 7 years time, when I retire, I would like another crack at it! I expect surprisingly most of the 5000 miles of green lanes will still be open by then.

A paid full time or part time National RoW Officer is something you should aim for. The TRF should try to become officially government recognised, like the ACU and properly consulted. You claim you are the governing body.

As the leading vehicular rights of way body (recognised by several government studies over the past 10 years, i.e.: CoCo and Sports Council), it's nonsense that the ACU continues to be the only club that HAS to be consulted. They and LARA think THEY are the only governing body! But I can see that the TRF is a little reluctant to take this up with the ACU, LARA, BMF, and 4WD lobby! Just remember who does the REAL work! They know! I always DID try to put the TRF first even as ACU and BMF National Rights of Way Officers for 10 years. Still a lot of duplicated effort goes on! The most consistent bad PR is 4WD. There has not been ONE national press pro 4WD article, whereas trail riding has occasionally won support from brave journalists in the national press, where it counts most. TRF Vintage Club? In my MCS letter the word "and" was missed out in saying that the TRF AND Vintage Club are the best clubs.

Anybody got a DT80 Yamaha or Kawasaki AE80 to sell me? Please help!

Brian Thompson (Proud to be a Hon. Life Member)

P.S. The 1995 TRF calendar is GREAT. Thanks a lot.

### CAN I SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS?

I have just read December TRAIL - I think I can solve (nearly) all of the problems of the TRF.

A few months ago now I saw a programme on the television about naturist rambles. These hardy souls, clad only in a rucksack and stout boots were able to enjoy the British Countryside without ado. On hailing passing non-naturist rambles a hearty greeting was exchanged as they went on their way. At no point did I hear an utterance of "hey - those chaps are not following the definitive route", in fact passers by would oft glance aside rather than dwell on their somewhat gaudy rucksacks or knobby hiking boots.

And so, you see, naturist trail riding could be the solution, no more hassle about where we ride, no more staring hikers and best of all, no more bickering about what we wear - YES - we would all look the same, well, nearly anyway.

Of course, we would still have to wear crash helmets to comply with the law, but this could ensure the continuance of TRAIL as we debated merrily on about exactly which type was appropriate ...

Arthur X - Cornish small four stroke mounted, belstaff clad, open faced correspondent