

GROUPS

BLACK COUNTRY

John Chilton, Tel: 01902 659009
1 & 3 Thurs, 8.30pm, The Mitre, Church Road, Bradmore, Wolverhampton

BRISTOL
David Clegg, Tel: 01275 373652

2nd Mon, Warmley Community Centre, Deanery Road, (A420), Kingswood

CAMBRIDGE
Richard Palmer, Tel: 01353 88344

1st Thur, Golden Ball, Boxworth

CHESHIRE
John Johnson, Tel: 0161 427 6963
2 & 4 Mon, The Robin Hood, Buxton Road, High Lane, Hazel Grove, Stockport

CORNWALL
Sally A. Madgwick, Tel: 01208 74411

Ring Secretary for details

CUMBRIA
Roger Harris, Tel: 01539 725198

2nd Wednesday, Duke of Cumberland, Kendal

DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Kevin Marsh, Tel: 01246 237910

2 & 4 Tue., Enfield Arms, Broughton Lane, Altercliffe, Sheffield

DEVON

Richard Arscott, Tel: 01803 612950

2nd Tue, The Welcome Stranger, Bickington, Nr. Newton Abbott

DORSET
Tony Summers, Tel: 01202 894419

1st Tue, Greyhound Inn, Winterbourne, Kingston, (Nr. Bere Regis)

EAST MIDLANDS

Graham Chinnery, Tel: 01332 863433

2nd Wed, The Chequers Inn, Main St, Breaston, South Derbyshire, T25 on M1

EAST SCOTLAND

Les Mollison, Tel: 01382 738530

2nd Wed, Glencarse Hotel, A85, Perth to Dundee Rd.

EAST YORKS

Dave Barratt, Tel: 01977 794143

2nd Wed, Kellingley Social Centre, Knottingley

GLOUCESTER

Charlie Morriss, Tel: 01453 885323

1st Tue, Painswick Institute, Painswick, Glos.

HERTFORDSHIRE

Colin Adlam, Tel: 0181 445 5203

1st Wed, Coach & Horses, Newgate St, Nr Cuffly

ISLE OF WIGHT

Mick Holbrook, Tel: 01983 866361

Last Thur, Liberal Club, Landguard Rd, Shanklin, IOW

KENT

Jeff Hayward, Tel: 01322 863521

2nd Tue, Pied Bull, Farningham, Nr Brands Hatch

LANCASHIRE

Keith Westley, Tel: 01704 893215

1st Tue, Hindshend Pub on A49, Charnock Richard

LINCOLNSHIRE

Alan Wilkinson, Tel: 01529 60793

4th Thur, The Queens Head, Kirkby-la-Thorpe, Sleaford

LODDON VALE

Bernard Green, Tel: 01344 50289

2nd Thurs, Inn in the Park, Woodley Centre, E. Reading

NORTH MIDLANDS

Simon Lowe, Tel: 01298 24388

1st Tue, Stafford Arms, Bagnall & 3rd Tue, Cheshire Cheese, Buxton

NORTHUMBERLAND

Mark Snoddy, Tel: 0191 386 0749

1st Tue, The Beamish Mary, No Place, Co. Durham

NORTH WALES

John Mills, Tel: 01477 534425

1st Wed, Hope & Anchor, Ewloe Place, Buckley

OXFORDSHIRE

Pat McGuire, Tel: 01844 238414

3rd Thur, Duke of Marlborough, Woodstock

RIBBLE VALLEY

Anthony Dinsdale, Tel: 01200 28507

2nd Tue, Pendle Hotel, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59)

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Mr. C. Ball, Tel: 01952 598092

2nd & last Wed, Cound Lodge Hotel, Shrewsbury Rd, Shrewsbury

SOMERSET

Peter Banks, Tel: 01749 860396

Last Thur, The Canal Inn, Wrantage

SOUTHERN

Euan Harrison, Tel: 01962 733781

3rd Wed, The Ship Inn, Owlesbury, Nr. Winchester

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Trevor Gardiner, Tel: 01788 815927

2nd Mon, The Spencer Arms, Chapel Brampton

SOUTH WALES

Stuart Dodwell, Tel: 01446 710851

1st Thur, Welsh Institute of Sport, Cardiff, 8pm

SUFFOLK

John Green, Tel: 01473 730493

Last Wed, Manger Pub, A134 Sudbury Rd, Bury-St-Ed.

SWINDON

Pete Owen, Tel: 01793 750557

1st Wed, Jacobs Ladder, Stratton St. Margaret, Swindon

SUSSEX

Bevis Billingham, Tel: 01243 585128

Last Thurs, Ashing on Social Club, Rear of Red Lion, A24, 9

miles North of Worthing

TEESIDE & NORTH YORKS

Leo Crone, Tel: 01325 380117

1st & 3rd Wed, Blacksmiths Arms, Swainby

THAMES VALLEY

Don Hoaglin, Tel: 01474 813977

3rd Mon, District Arms, Woodthorpe Rd, Ashford, Middlesex

WEST ANGLIA

David Knight, Tel: 01933 313816

1st & 3rd Thurs, Scott Bader Clubhouse, Opp. Parish Church, Woolaston, Wellingborough

WEST MIDLANDS

Dennis Hayter, Tel: 01527 23550

1st & 3rd Tue, Wilmoote Mens Club, Stratford on Avon

WEST SOMERSET

David Dyer, Tel: 01643 841139

2nd Wed, Anchor Inn, Exbridge

WEST YORKSHIRE

Gordon Carr, Tel: 01535 644568

1st & 3rd Thur, Bankfoot Cricket Club, Wickets Close, (off Cleckheaton Rd), Odsal, Bradford

WILTSHIRE

Bill Riley, Tel/Fax: 01225 863811

1st Tue, The Toll Gate, Holt, Trowbridge

WYVERN

Steve Pighills, Tel: 01902 672479

Every Thur, 10pm, Potter's Rose & Crown, Colley Lane, Halesowen



TRAIL

JULY, 1995

No. 203

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

EDITOR: Mike "Nettlebed" Pedley.



Wild Lane, Abthorpe, Northamptonshire

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All Contributions to the Editor Please keep it short and sweet!
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RoW COORDINATOR . Steve Neville, 19 Henley Deane, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 8SU.
Tel: 01474 332785.

The views expressed in 'Trail' are those of its correspondents and not necessarily of the editor or the T.R.F.

EDITOR

Whenever we read about our hobby in the National Press it's usually bad news, conflict damage etc. Wouldn't it be great, just for once, to see a headline like 'Rambler prosecuted for obstructd but the following appeared in The Times in the second week in June. 'Repairs wreck ancient track'. Ancient track? Was this some obscure little lane damaged by some well meaning farmer, surely the TRF couldn't be involved this time.

As I quickly scanned the article words like Countryside Commission, English Heritage and Wiltshire County Council jumped from the page! And the track? The Ridgeway no less! Brilliant! A monumental RoW cock-up and the TRF aren't even mentioned! Wiltshire CC are of course responsible for maintaining the Ridgeway and had seemingly received a grant from the CoCo to repair a badly rutted section. Oh, looks like I cheered too soon, we (cross country motorbikes) and the 4WD people were blamed for the ruts!

But back to the 'repair'. It looks as though Wiltshire CC, in line with most local authorities, were dragging their feet with the work and CoCo had threatened to withdraw the cash (a 75% contribution) unless they got their finger out, so to speak. A contractor was hurriedly engaged and proceeded to destroy a large section of the half-mile section he was meant to repair!

Now I don't for one minute wish to suggest that damaging the Ridgeway is in any way funny, it's not and I know that each and every TRF member would have shown equal concern and outrage as those who protested to English Heritage and thankfully got the job stopped. It's just somewhat ironic that those who seek to take away our right

to ride the Ridgeway on the grounds of (non-existent) conflict and damage should end up with egg on their faces. Perhaps one day those in authority will eventually realise that RoW users, be they rambler, horserider, mountain biker or trail rider are the only ones who really care about the countryside as opposed to merely paying lipservice as part of their chosen profession.

If anyone living near the Ridgeway could get a photo of the 'repairs' preferably with a large earth mover bogged down to its axles, I'm sure it would make a great cover shot for a future TRAIL!

Finally, the CoCo is to produce a Ridgeway Code of Respect to promote greater understanding amongst users and has for the time being dropped its policy of seeking TROs on the Ridgeway. TROs will however 'continue to be considered nationally ... to manage conflicts between users of the RoW network'. Ever thought of trying signs CoCo? It works exceedingly well in the Isle of Man.

NETTLEBED

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NATIONAL P.R. OFFICERS REPORT

1 JANUARY 1995 - 24TH FEBRUARY 1995

1. Compiled a 'Survey of Public Relations Activities at Group Level'. Others decided not to issue, but aim to adapt for other purposes.
2. Liaison with Garry Watson on proposed new TRF 'calling card' and advertisement (T & MX).
3. Wrote to Independent Television Commission on 'Police, Camera, Action' - legality of motorcycles towing trailers. My follow-up letter recommended BMF, MAG and TRF as 'expert' advisers for programme makers. Also asked to be forwarded to Carlton TV and suggested file names.
4. Asked by Dorset group for help - recognition of vehicular rights.
5. Liaison with Trevor Watson, Swindon Group PRO.
6. Liaison with a South West region member on a proposed charity effort - also publicising TRF.
7. Attended 'Welsh Forum for Motorised Sport'.
8. Help for Barry Houldsworth (Beds) on dealing with the press.
9. Letter to Lord Apsley (Cirencester Park) on a problem suffered by Gloucester Group. Promoted the TRF.
10. While in London - visited Sue Viner, NFU Countryside Adviser.
11. Considered TRF stand at a large country show - chose Town & Country Festival.
12. Response notes requested by Dave Giles and Richard Marshall on the Countryside Commissions prospectus 'Quality of Countryside/Quality of Life'.

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ROAD TEST

SUZUKI TS185 - LESS IS MORE

Although I have been a motorcyclist since 1967 and experienced what I now know to be trail riding that same year, I didn't actually join the TRF till October 1993. I have been away from bikes for several years and have lost touch with what machines were available. After studying the tests in all the monthly glossies I ended up with a (new) KDX125 which turned out to be totally unsuitable for the sort of terrain that exists in the areas that I go trail riding. I won't bore you with the details as I have already reported on its limitations in earlier issues of TRAIL but basically I found it to be too heavy (240lb dry) and at the same time too flimsy, with some biased gearing, an inadequate drive chain, hopelessly unsuitable rear suspension and a seat from hell.

Just to digress for a minute, I remember when I was much younger than I am now, I read a book on Japanese atrocities during WW2. One particularly nasty trick of theirs was to sit their victim on a sharp wooden beam with his legs dangling free either side. A series of increasingly heavy weights were attached to the poor man's feet, eventually crushing his testicles. My theory is that the Japanese gentleman responsible for devising that particular version of their TV game show "Endurance" escaped retribution at the end of the war and got a job with Kawasaki Heavy Industries as their Head of Trail Bike Seat Design.

I sold the KDX125 after only eight months, intending to buy a second hand enduro bike with the proceeds, but the patter of tiny feet (my bank managers) convinced me that the bulk of the money would be put to better use clearing my overdraft. This sad duty thus discharged I had only a few hundred notes left with which to buy a bike. Although I really wanted a KDX200 or WR200 (and still do) I simply couldn't afford one. So I went to the other extreme and bought, for £370, a sixteen year old Suzuki TS185C. I planned to use it on "gentle trails" until I had the money for an enduro bike. Which will be in the year 2020 if things don't look up soon.

Now I know I sang the praises of enduro bikes in a couple of editions of TRAIL and I received a certain amount of flak, written and verbal, for expressing my opinions on those types of machines. As I have already said, I would still LOVE A KDX200 - but the little Suzuki has turned out to be better for trail riding than I ever dreamed possible. What I want to say in this article is how much fun you can have for very little outlay - and why I think this bike is ideal for any type of green laning.

The Suzuki is very light - 218lbs dry. And that's with metal mudguards and knobby tyres as standard. By careful pruning - tachometer, indicators, battery and all its ancillary items, tool tray, surplus electrical items like the parking lights, etc., etc. - plus having (original equipment) plastic mudguards, I now have a machine

that has shed a "bag of bits" that weighs no less than 15lbs! So even allowing for fuel and oil, the bike must be no more than 220lbs wet, kerb weight. I could get it even lighter - the rear light subframe weighs no less than four and a half pounds and I did try removing this and substituting a smaller plastic "enduro" type item but I soon refitted the original as it is excellent for getting hold of to lift the bike onto a mini-bench (there is no centre stand of course.) It also makes a great frame onto which to bolt a small rack. That's useful for the tool bag - much better than a rucksack full of iron banging your spine into submission with every bump!

What is interesting to me here is the comparison between the weight of the TS185 and the KDX125. Both were marketed as trail bikes. (The KDX is discontinued now - obviously my adverse comments affected sales badly). Although the KDX was 15 years newer than the TS it was 22lbs heavier - not my idea of progress - despite being a 125cc and not a 185cc like the TS. Let's face it - the KDX is/was a road bike pure and simple whereas the TS was built for the trail. It was designed and sold for the American off-road market in the 1970s and it has all the desirable characteristics for this sort of use. It is low (handy for "paddling" through mud), light and very very simple. An air cooled single cylinder two stroke with a compression ratio of 5.5:1 and 17.5 bhp @ 6500rpm say it all really.

The motor starts first kick when even slightly warm and even when stood for a couple of weeks it fires up third kick. The most half hearted prod on the tiny kickstart gets the stalled motor back into life in any situation - try that on your DR350 or KLX250. I once watched a fellow rider spend 10 minutes trying to kickstart a hot KTM600 (or 620?). Why bother? Get a 2-stroke - much easier.

Handling on the trail is ideal - the bike was designed for it. I am not the best or fastest trail rider in the world but the TS feels just right. In fact it never feels so good as when I am stood on the pegs negotiating some nadgery bit. The reason, I feel, is that the design is a copy of various serious dirt/enduro tackle of the 1970s.

I have American dirt bike mags from the 1970s and in its stripped down form the TS resembles nothing more or less than a Bultaco or Montessa from that era. As anyone who watched "Classic Bikes" on Channel 4 will know, the Japanese word for "copy" and the Japanese word for "learn" are one and the same. I think that speaks for itself.

And, of course, as Mom, Pop and Junior all go dirt bike riding in the States (or at least they did till the Sierra Club stuck their oar in and Clinton turned half of California into a no bike zone) the TS had to be easier to ride, robust and reliable. As there are no gas stations on the Baja peninsula fuel economy had to be good too - I get 75mpg on the asphalt and around 60mpg on the trail. Quite good although the fuel tank could do with being a bit bigger - say 3 gallons instead of

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its slightly inadequate 2.2.

I mentioned earlier I was able to ditch the battery, its carrier and assorted bits and pieces. To riders only used to modern bikes this must seem an impossibility. They are used to generator/alternator and coil ignition for which a battery, rectifier and regulator are necessary. Not so on the TS. It has that most versatile and simple of systems - a magneto. Ignition and lighting is direct. The magneto has 3 coils - one feeds the CDI unit for the spark plug and the other two are for use when the lights are switched on. Coil 2 feeds the lights and coil 3 is for the ignition when the lights are on. Brilliant - and so simple. Why oh why have manufacturers stopped building them like this? They say magnetos are dearer than generator/coil/battery systems. Can't see it myself. More likely the magneto never needs any expensive spare parts so they can't rip us off if the thing never breaks down. And even though its a 6 volt direct system the lighting is perfectly adequate for the 50mph (tarmac) cruising speed that my bike is happy at. Apart from that, I ride on Pirelli Garacross MX tyres so don't really want to go any faster on a metallated surface. Incidentally the wear rate of these tyres is better than I expected - I had them on the KDX as well so in total they have done about 3000 miles of mixed tarmac/green lane riding. The front is hardly worn at all and the rear looks good for at least another 1000 miles. I know 4000 miles isn't a lot for a tyre in car terms, but lets face it - these tyres aren't really meant for any asphalt work at all. One thing that WILL put some people off this excellent little machine is the fact that it is a two stroke. This simple and reliable engine design is, I know, not liked by many people, including various TRF members.

What the hell, I say. This bike originates from an earlier, happier era when engines were designed by engineers and not by pseudo green politicians. And, after all, it IS totally road legal even if it is noisier than modern engines. Anyway, who wants to live in a world of perfect peace and quiet, populated by faceless tee-total vegetarian non-smoking grey little citizens who have forsaken mobility for eco-friendly public transport? I certainly don't.

To summarise then, the TS185 is simple, sturdy, robust and reliable. It is light and can be made even lighter. Fuel consumption is acceptable and it handles well even on badly surfaced green lanes. It will cruise on tarmac at 50mph and the seat is good for 100 miles before the aches really set in. You can get a good one for £400 - £500 although I have seen immaculate late models (1982 TS185ER) for up to £900. When my finances improve - probably the same year the EC finally bans trail riding, if not bikes - I WILL get something like a KDX or WR200, but in the meantime I am staying with my superb little relic of the 1970s, Suzuki's TS185. I intend never to sell it - if my grandchildren are allowed to go trail riding they can fight over it when I've gone to that great big green lane in the sky.

Paul Atherton, Ribble Valley Group



FEM UNHAPPY AT 100BHP RESEARCH REVIEW

The European Commission produced its draft terms of reference for the 100bhp review on 19th May 1995. FEM is concerned that the findings of existing scientific studies may be ignored, except for a latest one which was the only one to support the Commission's position. This means the very studies which persuaded

MEPs to support FEM's campaign in the first place may not be considered. At a consultation meeting on 24th May, representatives of Member Governments, the motorcycle industry (ACEM), FIM and FEM among others gave their view of the Commission's proposal. FEM also said that the limited terms of the new study means it cannot achieve the scientific authority of the existing studies.

The French Government, which was responsible for the original 100bhp proposal, also threatened to introduce a 50bhp limit if it was shown that that would improve safety.

NEWS FROM THE US - LEG PROTECTORS AND SEAT BELTS

European riders' rights activists attended the National Coalition of Motorcyclists meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota on 11 - 13 May. They were shocked that US safety nazis suggest leg protectors and seat belts could increase safety. Quote from the September 1994 report Lower Extremity Injuries from Motorcycle Crashes: A Common Cause of Preventable Injury, "Potential structural modifications of motorcycles to reduce the risk of lower extremity injuries include adding a restraint mechanism to prevent ejection from the motorcycle...". US bikers were similarly amazed at Euro bike restrictions.

A meeting was held with Ed Youngblood, President of the American Motorcyclist Association and Vice President of FIM. FEM hopes it will lead to greater understanding between FIM and FEM, for the good of motorcycling generally.

TUV STYLE REPLACEMENT TYRE RULES FOR EU?

Confusion has arisen over the Multi-Directive chapter on tyres, and with interpretation of two amendments passed by the European parliament. There are demands that machines capable of over 180km/h should be subject to restrictions on replacement tyres, and fears that the restrictions could spread to less powerful machines.

Fresh from a recent victory against a national bike ban when smog levels rise, German riders say a truly harmonised Europe should lead to a relaxation of their notorious TUV bureaucracy, not the other way around or an extension.

FEM comments that the present system which operates in most countries, where there is a list of recommended tyres, is enough. Indeed that is why there is coding of tyre capabilities (eg. "H" rated or "V" rated). "There is no justification for a 'big brother knows best' approach", said FEM's Simon Milward.

Meanwhile Roger Barton, the MEP in charge of the Multi-Directive, says that during the Second Reading of Parliament later in the year, any interpretation problems can be solved, making it clear that brand names cannot be specified in any way.

EXERPTS FROM "HAMPSHIRE LANES"

An Order made for a bridleway at Warsash has been confirmed with modifications. The word bridleway has been replaced with the word Byway - thanks to the Solent Bridleways Group. This highlights a matter that has caused me some confusion in recent months. Why should carriage drivers feel the need to use bridleways when so many footpaths, bridleways and other ways not yet recorded on the Definitive Map should be byway? Surely a little research is easier than attempting to change the law?

The Countryside Commission's post code ... GL50 3RA. Shouldn't really leg pull following the publication of CoCo's Out In The Country - a fine publication that includes the following: "a route that is recorded as a bridleway can, in fact, be legally used by vehicles". (page 8). Page 26 does a good job with the higher rights 'thing'. Order plenty of copies and send them to our detractors.

The CLA are firing up their Hampshire members (now there is a word that could be widely construed) to press for a change in the law to differentiate between motorised and non motorised vehicles in order to protect the county's green lanes. Funny, there is no mention of preventing agricultural use! For that matter what practical or academic work do the CLA currently do to preserve these lanes?

Sprockets & Chains

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PROPOSED TRO - OBJECTORS REQD.

DRAFT PROPOSAL BY HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE -
24TH MAY 1995

LANCASTER CITY/RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH
HORNBY ROAD (ALSO KNOWN AS SLAIDBURN ROAD) SALTER FELL
PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF DRIVING

ISSUE FOR CONSIDERATION

The introduction of a prohibition of driving of Motor Vehicles (except for access) along Hornby Road (also known as Slaidburn Road) over Salter Fell, to prevent further damage to the track by four wheel drive vehicles.

INFORMATION

The Salter Fell or Hornby Road is an upland track between Higher Salter Farm (OS Grid Ref. SD 608 626) and the end of Wood House Lane (OS Grid Ref. SD 693 548) near Higher Wood House Farm, a distance of approximately 13 kilometres. The track has historical importance as an old salter's trackway and parts of it are believed to follow the Roman Road from Ribchester to Overbarrow.

Between Wood House Lane and the moorland gates near Croasdale Fell Quarry the track is constructed of concrete and in June 1992 the Divisional Surveyor resurfaced the length of road north west of Mallowdale Gate to a point south of the Lancaster City/Ribble Valley Borough Boundary.

The repairs were very simple, involving the laying and rolling of stone over a geotextile underlay on the worst lengths. The road crust in these areas was extremely fragile and in the process of carrying out the work, substantial damage was caused not only to the road itself but to the surrounding areas. As a consequence, the County Council had to pay a substantial claim to the landowner and the overall cost of the scheme was something in excess of £50,000.

The experience gained during this work, including the difficulties in construction, and formal complaints by English Nature about damage caused to the local environment, persuaded the County Surveyor that it would be unwise to continue with the repair work to the south and east of the Mallowdale Gate.

The remaining length of track, to the south and east of the Mallowdale Gate, particularly the section between Shooters Clough/Hard Hill Top and Croasdale Fell, has been severely damaged due to use by four wheel drive vehicles. This use has contributed to the formation of several large depressions in the track. The four wheel drive enthusiasts who use the track have tried to fill the depressions with various unsuitable materials but their actions have had little or no effect in repairing the damage to the track.

When he became aware of the situation, the County Surveyor requested the four wheeled drive enthusiasts to refrain from using the track and attempting to repair it and there have been no reported instances of significant usage by this Group since that time. Due to the remote location of the track and its associated access difficulties together with the extent of the damage, the cost of repairing this section to the same standards as the re-surfaced length to the north west could well be as

much as £100,000.

However, from investigations on site it would appear that the peat in this area is slowly engulfing the tipped materials in such a way that over a considerable period it is likely the land will heal itself. In the circumstances, the County Surveyor has serious reservations about attempting to get equipment to this length of track to remove the materials and commence repair work.

A Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting the driving of motor vehicles (except for access) whilst allowing the moorland to stabilise over a period of time and enable proper repairs to be carried out in due course would still permit landowners, farmers and other authorised users such as shooting parties to proceed along the length of track concerned in order to gain access to adjacent land and property.

The track is of considerable importance to walkers, cyclists and horseriders, providing quiet recreation in a remote moorland area within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and such an Order would enable them to continue to use the track.

In due course a stable moorland with a suitably maintained pathway would add significantly to the recreational value of the route.

The County Planning Officer has been consulted and supports the making of a Prohibition of Driving (except for access) Order which would be in accordance with the provisions of the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan.

The Chief Constable has been consulted on the proposed prohibition of driving and his comments will be reported orally at the meeting.

DECISION REQUIRED

It is recommended that, subject to the views of the police, Lancaster City Council and Ribble Valley Borough Council:

1. Notice be published of the County Council's intention to make an Order under Sections 1 to 4 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended and all other enabling powers, to prohibit the driving of motor vehicles (except for access) along Hornby Road (also known as Slaidburn Road) between Higher Salter Farm and Wood House Lane, a distance of approximately 13 kilometres and in the event of no objections being received and no adverse comments being received as a result of the local consultation procedures, the Order be made.

There is no suggestion or claim that regular motorcycle use has caused any damage to the surface, yet they also are to be banned from using this valuable recreational resource. Is that reasonable?

Lancs. C.C. have a statutory duty to assert and protect the rights of all highway users, and it is their responsibility - not an option to maintain the Queen's Highway. After all this is why we pay our Road Fund Licence.

It is us as possible object to this order after all even the figure of £100,000 is nothing compared to the money spent by Lancs. C.C. maintaining footpaths which are eroded by the passage of many feet.

P.S. I have been told that the original damage was caused by army vehicles at the end of the last War and has obviously not been properly repaired since. Could anyone out there confirm this? Any information or user evidence you have might help save this important lane.

**Please send objections to: Lancashire County Council,
Chief Executive, PO Box 78, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ.**

LARA NEWS

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

As Motor Recreation Development Officer for LARA, I receive requests from time to time concerning the various motoring organisations' representatives for the counties throughout England and Wales. Recently, there have been several such request for the contact details of the TRF rep in Northumberland. I appreciate that there have been recent changes in Northumberland. However, I would be very grateful if you could let me know, either from your own knowledge, or by printing a short item in the next TRAIL magazine, who might be the best person for interested persons to contact for the TRF in Northumberland.

Thank you in advance for your help with this matter.

Caroline Garfield, LARA Motor Recreation Development Office

EXTRACTS FROM LARA NEWS MYSTERY VEHICLES SOUGHT

There have been many reports in the national press in recent weeks of damage to green roads by recreational vehicles which clearly involve a totally new design. The first reader to identify the recreational machine which can leave 'ruts two feet deep' will receive a valuable prize: a copy of the book "Check your Facts, the Journalist's Bible".

CURRENT LARA ACTIVITIES

The MRDO Caroline Garfield, is currently working on the following local plans:

Restormel (Cornwall)	Wokingham (Berkshire)
South Pembrokeshire (Dyfed)	Rother (East Sussex)
Bassetlaw (Nottinghamshire)	Lewes (East Sussex)
Derbyshire Dales (Derbyshire)	North Wiltshire
Great Grimsby (South Humberside)	
Shrewsbury & Atcham (Shropshire)	

Also being studied are:

Northamptonshire Recreation Strategy
Staffordshire Countryside Strategy
Exmoor National Park Local Plan - for which the Public Inquiry is due in June 1995.

There are now less than 80 authorities, out of 334, who have not responded to our request to be consulted. To this list should be added County Council Plans and Strategies, Community Forest Plans, National Park Plans, etc., and more recently, local Minerals Plans, all with relevance to motorsport.

Members of LARA clubs who find that motoring, motorcycling, or motorsport are not mentioned in their local Plans, and who need advice on how they should respond, should contact the MRDO at this address: PO Box 9,

Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 2FE. Tel: 01543 467218).

Some authorities charge high sums for copies of their plans (£50 in some areas), but local residents are sometimes offered a sensible reduction. This is a further reason for co-operation with HQ.

THE ENVIRONMENT BILL

LARA has written to the Rt Hon John S Gummer MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, with reference to the Environment Bill 1994, Part III. This concerns National Parks and their supposed purposes. The question of whether the term 'quiet enjoyment' should be included in one of the Parks' purposes has caused lively debate about the term in general; LARA has noted that it is used to describe activities encouraged in many other areas of the countryside, which somewhat defeats the object of the National Parks.

Motorsport bodies, including the RAC, are concerned that long standing motoring events will be excluded from traditional park venues because of this clause. 'No-one in National Parks promotes motoring activities now, with no such clause in place, so what do you think will happen if this clause succeeds?' So asks Ian Davis, of the RACMSA.

The outcome is still in the balance, with a second hearing shortly.

BBC: FOUL PLAY, NOT FAIR REPORTING

When investigating allegations of damage by recreational vehicles, it can be difficult to make a firm conclusion as real evidence is often confused, or even missing. This presented no problems for the BBC team filming a news report on the background to the Dunlop Case. They were looking for damage by 4 x 4 use, and when they found none, they hired a Landrover locally, and drove up and down in the mud. This is a particular disappointment for local users, who had taken the responsible decision not to use the lane until the legal case about its status had been decided.

A week later, a different BBC team found users less co-operative than usual. No-one knows why.

Ed. - I wonder was it the same team which planted drug takers accessories, ie. syringes, needles, etc. when they couldn't find any on site whilst filming a documentary in Glasgow - this was reported in the Daily Telegraph

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The TRF has been accepted to have a stand in the indoor feature: 'Conservation Alive'. There is no charge.

It has an attendance of 120,000, and is at the National Agricultural Centre, Warwickshire.

I would be pleased to hear from volunteers to help out at the event. (I already have offers from West Midlands Group). You should get exhibitors passes, and can also enjoy the remainder of the Festival.

I am also interested in offers concerning the following, related to green roads:

1. Good photographs - particularly of historical features, mixed users, horse events, etc. (send b & w photocopy first).
2. Before/during/after pictures and commentary on restoration (including clearance) projects.
3. Accounts (particularly from 'experts' and non trail riders) of benefits to plants and animals, etc.
4. Criteria for sustainability applied by TRF members or others.

5. Your suggestions (including on how we 'protect green lanes')?

I would also like to hear from TRF members or others who have expertise on exhibitions or who know of economical sources of materials (eg: photographic enlargements, encapsulation, etc. I live in Evesham, Worcs on weekdays, so information on nearby companies for large sized jobs would be useful).

Please make this your first priority. Publicise at your group and regional meetings. Any form of help is welcomed. Please don't think that someone else will offer: if we all thought that then...

Mark F. Holland, Hon. National Public Relations Officer

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MOROCCO BOUND

EXTRACT FROM WEST WILTS TRF NEWSLETTER NO. 7

(A Tale of two Suzukis)

North Africa on a Trail bike has been one of my ambitions since I visited Marrakech on holiday in the mid 80's. The vast emptiness, the people and the scenery all convinced me that a trip on a motorcycle would be the ONLY way to travel!

Originally I had intended to go to Algeria to visit the Hogger Mountains across the Sahara, on a solo trip, but several things modified my original plans. The Algerian fundamentalists shooting foreigners was the first problem, quickly followed by the Algerian borders being closed.

Some basic problems that needed to be solved before a trip could be started were finance and not being able to take more than 4 weeks holiday at any one time from work. All these were sorted in one stroke, I was informed that I was being made redundant! No job to get back for, and some redundancy money to fund the trip.

My girlfriend had been expressing her desire to join me, and I only agreed on condition that she could get unpaid leave as two of us with no job to come back to and a mortgage to pay was not really sensible! She managed to get two months unpaid leave granted (February and March '95) and the planning started in earnest.

We decided that we would need a bike each if we were going to do any off road work. This meant that Heather would take my trusty, rusty SB400 (one of the few trail bikes she can reach the ground on!) and I set about finding a second hand 600. The problem of finding and sorting out all the gremlins on the Suzuki DR600 was a story in itself, which I won't go into here.

We booked the Portsmouth-Bilbao ferry through MCN (good discount), got all the insurances, jabs, international driving licenses and masses of other minor bits and pieces sorted out. So at 5.15pm on 31st January 1995 we left Warminster. It was cold, windy and raining hard as we rode south to Portsmouth.

At Portsmouth we met a couple of Americans, Garry and Marina, on a BMW R100GS Paris/Dakar who were two up, with more luggage on one bike than the both of us put together, and were apparently heading for Mauritania and Senegal. They had never been to Africa before, were planning to camp in Morocco and hadn't got visas for Mauritania or Senegal!!

The Ferry was very good, even though it was a 32 hour crossing, and the price did include a cabin with P & O.

Bilbao was cool and overcast as we set off South, travelling a leisurely 200 miles a day across Spain, stopping only at Granada to go round the spectacular Alhamra Palace. We arrived in Algericas on Monday 6th February and booked the Algericas/Tangier ferry for 9.30 the following morning. (There are three crossings

a day and it costs £25 for bike and rider each way during the low season).

On the ferry the next morning the only other bikes were on a trailer behind a very large 4 x 4 (2 XR250s and a DR350) and were kitted out for some serious hill bashing, the Spanish owners giving us the thumbs up as we boarded for the two and a half hour crossing.

Tangier customs was total chaos and took as long as the crossing itself to get through. Leaving customs we headed south over the generally good roads, past the generally bad drivers, towards the Atlas Mountains. The first night was spent in Chefchaoun on the edge of the Rif mountains and the next day we rode through the mountains, to be accosted by every hash seller in Africa. (They seemed to appear from every bush along the road side!)

We were relieved to be stopped at a police road block in the mountains since some of the hash sellers had decided to follow us in a couple of vehicles. The Police waved the following vehicles through, much to our relief and we then continued on. The road through the mountains was very poor and reduced our speed down to 30/35mph, but once out of the mountains the roads improved again.

On the way south we stayed three nights in Fez, three nights in Mekens and two nights in the capital Rabat before heading south to Casablanca for lunch, then onwards to El Jadida and a hotel overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

By this time we had travelled a fair distance and the head race bearings on the DR had taken a hammering, especially over the Rif mountain road, giving them a very notchy feeling. Also the engine had developed a rattle about the time we arrived in Fez (sounded very cam-chain like!)

From El Jadida we crossed a flat, barren plain to Marrakech with the road running dead straight all the way to the horizon, and on average we passed 10 other vehicles on the road every hour.

Even though we had been to Marakech twice before, it still didn't fail to excite and entertain. The hotel we stayed in for two nights had a very large underground car park below the hotel which was very convenient for a service and oil change on the bikes. (10/40 was not available in Morocco, so we had to use 20/40 instead.)

From Marakech we rode up into the high Atlas Mountains, above the snow line (still quite a bit of snow in February), through the Tiehka Pass (2260m above sea level) and down the other side to Ouarzazate on the edge of the Sahara.

(to be continued)

Geln Packinson, West Wilts

PACK HORSE/BRIDGE

BEAST OF BURDEN by Harry Waldon (Exmoor Review 1972)

The author wishes to acknowledge the following sources: 'From Pack-Horse to Turnpike', by Gilbert Sheldon (OUP 1928); 'Pack Horse Days in the West', by Geoffrey Grigson (The Countryman, Autumn, 1951); 'Pack Horse Bridges', by J. D. U. Ward (Architectural Review, August 1964); and 'The Exmoor Pack Horse' by J. K. Ridler (Exmoor Review, No. 2 1960) Mr. Ridler also supplied other detail.

I remarked to a visitor, looking at the pack-horse bridge at Allerford, that two hundred years ago it would have been on the main road to Selworthy. In this hilly countryside without carts or the pack-horse was the beast of burden - not the least of traction, as is the cart-horse - and all the loads went on his back long after wheeled traffic had become the means of conveyance in most of England.

This revolution in transport was relatively recent. Collinson writing in 1790, said that in the parishes like Upton and Withypool no wheeled vehicles were then in use. The change to carts which had been accelerated by the new Turnpikes, was slow to reach the hilly west, beginning in 1794 and 1808 and complete by 1830. F. T. Elworthy writing in 1877, said that well within his recollection no other means of carriage than pack-horses existed in considerable districts in West Somerset.

Although many pack-horse bridges have been destroyed, more survive than

in any other county. A few other relics remain: such as the short length of single-file paving on the pack-horse road from Allerford to Selworthy, and the exceptional number of old withy beds in Somerset, used by the makers of pannier baskets. The word 'pannier', too, survives in the Pannier Markets at Newton Abbot and Barnstaple. The purpose of the low parapet on a pack-horse bridge was to allow clearance for the panniers. The high arch avoids damming in times of flood and at the same time eases the structural strain. The cobble paving is a type of road surface of which little now survives. Beside the bridge, usually, is the much older ford.

The horse was the universal carrier. A hundred years ago many leases still required the farmer to apply 200 horse loads of good rotten dung per acre before a corn crop. This was taken to the fields in panniers, also known as 'potts' or

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'dorsles', and dropped by releasing the bottoms.

The load was known as a 'seam' and in Somerset the load of a 'sumpter' horse was 240lbs of manure, both words deriving from the Greek 'sagma', a pack saddle. A load of wool was known as a 'pack', also 240lbs. The Devon pack-horse was larger than most, and the heaviest would carry up to 400lbs. Sand was carried in dorsles from the nearest 'sand place' by the shore or river, wherever sand was suitable. Sometimes the carriage of sand required 200 horse loads per acre, though it might be less for greater distances. Seaweed used as manure was carried similarly; all heavy work for man and beast.

An alternative to the dorsle was a wooden pack saddle, known as a 'crook', laid along the horse's back, with 'bent pieces of wood, not unlike yokes, sticking out on each side of the pack saddle, joined by transverse bars made of elm or willow'. So wrote Cellia Fiennes in 1698 when she saw the Cornish harvest coming in on crooks. 'They cannot so equally poise it, she wrote, 'but the going of the horse is like to cast it down sometimes on the one side and sometimes on the other, for they load them from the neck to the taile, and pretty high, and are forced to support it with their hands; so to a horse they have two people and the woman leads and supports them as well as the men, and goes through thick and thin'. She expressed surprise at the entire absence of carts, nor were there any until a hundred years later. These comments refer to the harvest. The load was usually roped to the crook.

An Inn, 'The Horse and Crook', once stood in the main street of Dunster. A replica of the inn sign still hangs by the place, but the original board is in the possession of the Exmoor Society.

Sometimes small wooden boxes were attached to the crook on each side, known as 'dung butts', also used for stones. When the use of lime became general in the 18th century the horses carried it from the kilns, two or three small bags being laid across the pack saddle. Other loads were corn, hay, faggots, teazles and kegs of smuggled whiskey! Some unusual loads were roofing lead from Bampton to Tiverton on nine horses for 10s.6p. with a return load of new lead on fifteen horses for 17s. 6p. (1753), also broken up church bells carried from Winsford to Cullompton (1765), and six chimney tops from Barnstaple to Selworthy on three horses for 15s. (1817).

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F. J. Snell gives this description of the pack-horse in the 'Book of Exmoor'. 'He was bred by a pack-horse from a pack-mare and might be termed in some sort of thoroughbred. Generally about 15 hands high, it was impossible to conceive a more useful animal - he was a 'Jack of all Trades'. Gilbert Sheldon, in 'From Trackway to Turnpike', describes him as 'hardy, good looking, sure footed, sufficiently speedy, with remarkable good feet and very fine shoulders'. The horses travelled in a string of nine, the leader being the best horse. Nine was the legal limit, but the law was often broken.

Farm horses would not have travelled far from home, but as early as the 17th century the country was covered by pack trains, with, for instance, regular weekly services between London and Exeter, Barnstaple, Tiverton and Bampton.

Julian Bruford, West Somerset Group

LETTERS

SHOOTING TRAIL RIDERS?

I was interested to see a letter in the May edition of TRAIL about a coming together of a couple of trail riders and a shooting party. As one who enjoys both ways of wasting time and (a lot!) of money, may I offer the following advice if a similar incident arises.

Point out that you believe that you are on a public highway, then *remind* the person with the gun (the person is also called a gun but that would make the sentence sound silly) that, "A person commits an offence if, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse (the proof whereof lies on him), he has with him in a public place a loaded shot gun. Public places include any highway. You might forget to include the 'loaded' bit, of course; easily done. Then you could mention that there is probably no need for you to mention this to the police, although everyone knows that the police take a *very serious interest indeed* in any incident that involves firearms.

The other comment I have to make concerns Tonto's last bit about not being bothered that the shoot was spoilt. Well, as a shooter, I might not be bothered if trail riding is spoilt, mightn't I? But I believe in live and let live. Let's not start knocking other people's legitimate country activities.

Ian Grimshaw, Derbyshire

COAST-TO-COAST

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members concerned with the organisation of the Coast-to-Coast run on 28/29th April 1995.

Special thanks go to the leaders of group 10 - Paul Mason and Dave Loney. They provided myself and Dave Dunn and the rest of the group with some great trails and good company over the course of the 2 days. We are not used to quite so many great rocks in our trails down in Wiltshire!

Because we had no logistical backup, we based ourselves half way between

Scarborough and Morecambe in a village called Crakehall just outside Bedale.

All in all, we covered 475 miles in the saddle in the 2 days. Obviously a lot of this was road work - we had to leave Crakehall at 0730 in the morning and we still got to Scarborough a bit late for the start of the first day's run. 70 miles on an XR600 on the road is a bit boring unless there are some twisty bits!

Paul led us pretty swiftly with a strange glint in his eye for most of the day, and the bugger didn't get us to Hawes until 8 o'clock in the evening. I was partly to blame for getting a front wheel concussion burst puncture at 7 o'clock with still half an hour on the trails to go. I was feeling well knackered and somewhat hacked-off by this time but all the blokes in the group lent a much appreciated helping hand.

By the time we arrived back in Crakehall at 9 o'clock and had showered and changed, the pub in the village had stopped serving food but the landlady's husband very kindly drove us into Bedale so we could at least have a takeaway and a pint or two. We hit the sack pretty early because we had to leave for Hawes (another 30-odd miles) by 0800 the following morning for the start of the second day. To be quite honest I wasn't looking forward to it a great deal due to a bad case of baboon-butt and a snivelling desire to chicken out of more rock strewn trails. However, the need to climb aboard once more proved to be strong enough to overcome the feelings of apprehension and the sore bum.

Dave Loney led us slightly more sedately than Paul on the second day and actually gave us some time to take in some of the stunning scenery (though not enough time to get a camera out!). To make up for the slightly slower pace, Dave flung in some pretty evil little bits of trail. We arrived at Morecambe at about 5 o'clock in the evening after another superb days trail riding. The only fly in the ointment was that we then had a 70 mile road trip back to Crakehall to contend with. After tailing Paul (Joey Dunlop) Mason all the way back, we finally arrived back at the digs at about 7 o'clock. The Theakstons went down well that evening! The B & B at Crakehall, Kexgill House, was so comfortable and welcoming, we decided to stay another night before heading back down south mid morning on Monday.

Once again, a big thankyou to all involved in the run. One thing that will always stick in my mind is the great fondness that everyone who knew him

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had for Fred Garbutt. Thoughts and stories of Fred and his exploits permeated the whole weekend. Paul told a few good tales about him and was obviously close to him. I feel quite cheated that I never met him. It was quite moving, stopping at the place where Fred's Wreath was placed by the trail and sharing a minutes silence with some of his close friends. Hope to see you all again next year.

Vic Price, West Wilts Group

RE TYRES

The TRF should recommend the use of trials tyres only (bound to be ignored, but it shows we care, officially!)

In 30 years of trail riding I've always used trials, though often feeling a second class rider with the knobbly lads! Motocross tyres belong on a race track. They are semi illegal, ugly and are far removed from the correct image of road bikes using public highway.

If you need such tyres, then green lanes must be out of repair.

It's bad PR like enduro machines on the road. Motocross tyres can damage soft grass. We are NOT racers.

We must get away from that competitive image.

We are "ramblers on wheels" and should look like road users and not use full face helmets and highly coloured gear like a circus clown!

I said in 1989, try and keep a low profile. It still applies!

Brian Thompson, Ex-National Rights of Way Officer, Newcastle upon Tyne

PS: G. Wilson is right. Keep off High Street in the Lakes. The Lakes is a highly sensitive area. Any ammunition will be used against us!

THE MEMORY MAN

When I were a lad, me mam used to send me up t'road to get a loaf. The road I used to walk was a short cut to the shop. It was a lane wide enough to take a car but used very little. We moved when I was fifteen and the lane was forgotten until I got married and moved back to that area again.

One day I walked up to the old lane and found it overgrown. A few years later when I bought a bike I used to go to the lane and bit by bit, yard by yard, I cleared it enough for a motorcycle to pass through it. I rode it quite often, in fact, very often!

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Of course, other bikers could then use it and soon after, a motor club used it for a car rally. First they cut down part of the hedge to make more room and moved all the old tree roots that made the lane fun to ride. So, my lovely lane got rutted. Come winter the surface was washed down the lane to form a mud pit at the bottom. This mud clogged up the stream which overflowed and caused the bank to fall in. What more can I say!

I have another lane that I have cleared over the years but I have left a few trees growing so that 'four wheelers' can't get through, even a Fiat Panda has tried. I try to keep this lane for trail riders only, I think this is a good idea.

Here are a few good tips:

I bought myself a pair of army trousers with map pockets on each leg, y'know the type! I then made two leather pockets to sew onto the knees with velcro for the opening. For padding I use polythene bubble packaging, large or small, pushed into the map pockets as well. Also, for my elbows I use Tubigrip, double backed and filled with the same stuff.

I never go trail riding without my blood group, details of my next of kin and most important, my TRF card!

Here's a tip for XT250 riders. The next time you take the timing cover off, cut it around the edge of the gasket face so that you can change a sprocket without taking the whole thing off. If you cut a slot for the gear lever, all you have to do is take out one screw.

For a grab handle, a piece of rope spliced onto the rack or frame is ideal for one thing, it doesn't stick up where it shouldn't, if you come down hard onto the seat!

By the way, if any of you guys are going on the Exmoor weekend in October, make sure Dave has his boots on, he tends to forget them sometimes.

M. J. Troake, West Somerset

CONTROVERSY NETTLEBED? WHERE SHALL WE START?

I bought a trail bike, Ian Thompson's book, got a marked up map and joined the TRF. In that order.

I joined the TRF because it seemed a good idea - still does. I did not join to get maps marked. I don't believe that lots of people join just for the maps - far from it, so many don't appear to own maps.

That's alright by me, I love leading runs - my pace, me at the front, go where

I want to, etc. Love it.

If I meet someone who wants a map, TRF member or not I will help them. Better to show them where they can ride than have them running around causing trouble where they shouldn't be. I've even known some of them to ask for TRF membership forms.

But what really annoyed me were the RoW workers who would let me do the equivalent of 3 full working weeks per year sending out road closure notices from the London Gazette and then not share their information. I must stress that most of the people I asked were extremely helpful but some not so. Also I ought to mention that I did not take on the Gazette job for what I could get out of it any more than I expected to be helped more than any other member but I suppose human nature dictates that I should be a bit disappointed when the traffic was so one way.

I am aware of the set up in the north that will enable all members to enjoy the fruits of others labours in the records offices and I sincerely applaud their initiative.

How about the secret societies in some of the other counties relaxing a bit?

Phil Sadler, Derby

"IN SEARCH OF THE NORMANS"

Myself and a fellow member of the South Wales Group are taking our bikes to France for a few days riding in September. We will be exploring the area South of Rouen in Normandy. Can anyone help with information or advice on how the French do it! What maps they use and if they do it is it legal?

Keve Lindsey, South Glamorgan

WELLIES OR NOT?

Further to Bob Woodcock's letter regarding the unsuitability of trials wellies for trail riding I recently had the misfortune to fall from my bike and was for some time trapped beneath it. The heat from the exhaust pipe caused 1st degree burns to my leg - through my stout leather boot.

Had I been wearing wellies I am sure the injury would have been far more widespread - and I would still be peeling off bits of rubber.

Sincere thanks to Tony Robinson who scorched his hands in rescuing me.

Another big message here, I know Bob agrees - **DON'T RIDE ALONE.**

Phil Sadler, Derby

PS As I recall, you are horizontal more than you are on the seat - Ed.

USEFUL NAMES AND ADDRESSES

BMF LIAISON OFFICER: Derrick Collins, 11 Grangewood Road, Wollaton, Nottingham, Notts. NG8 2SJ. Tel: 0115 9282806.

KEEPER OF STATIONERY: Tony Eyre, 8 Spencer Road, Belper, Derby, DE56 1JY. Tel: 01773 828311.

KEEPER OF DISPLAY BOARDS: Jeff Ward Ltd., Gretton Road, Weldon, Northamptonshire, NN17 3HY. Tel: 01536 267036 or Fax: 01536 408787.

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