

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
Nigel Hockin, Tel: 0161 456 8270
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 Arcscott, 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, J25 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, Hindshead 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 Thursday, Duke of Marlborough (A44), 1.5 miles North
of Woodstock

RIBBLE VALLEY
Anthony Dinsdale, Tel: 01200 28507
2nd Tue, Pendle Hotel, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59)

SHROPSHIRE
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

SOUTH LONDON & SURREY
Brian Wright 0181 686 3458 Wed/Sat or 01797 363373 Sun/Tue
9pm every Wed, Epsom Heath & Football Club, Priest Hill
Fields, Ewell, Surrey

SOUTH NORTHANTS
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

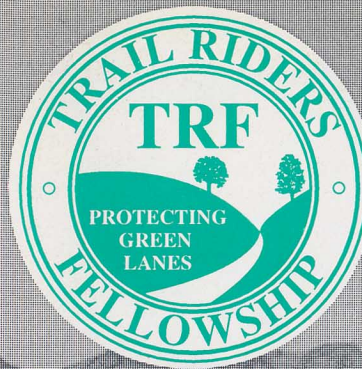
WEST MIDLANDS
Dennis Hayter, Tel: 01527 23550
1st & 3rd Tue, Wilmcote Mens Club, Stratford on Avon

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

AUGUST, 1995

No. 204

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

EDITOR: Mike "Nettlebed" Pedley.

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All Contributions to the Editor Please keep it short and sweet!
COPY DEADLINE: FIRST POST, 1ST TUESDAY OF MONTH

CLASSIFIED

SUZUKI TS185ER "W" reg. MOT and tax. Sound, reliable bike, £395. Tel: Ian on 01772 617406 (Preston).

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KAWASAKI KLR250 1994, 8000 miles. Road use only. Scott oiler and carrier fitted. FSH. £1950. Tel: 01943 877024 (Ilkley).

WANTED std silencer or complete exhaust for DR350S. Must be good. Tel: David 01793 826408 (Swindon).

WANTED XR250, must be road registered and mechanically sound, don't mind the cosmetics. Contact Hugo on Cardiff 01222 223185.

SUZUKI DR200 '89 model - bought new in '91. Only 2000 miles, excellent condition. Many spares/tools, etc. MOTd. £975. Tel: 01243 372107.

ALPINE STAR Teck 4 motocross boots, blue and white. Size 45 or 10. £45. Tel: 01200 445657.

YAMAHA IT175 "B" reg, MOT, DEP silencer, S/S fasteners, workshop manuals, good condition. £550. Tel: 01625 613600 (Cheshire).

WANTED WR250, 1992 onwards. May consider WR200. Tel: 01287 634972 after 6pm.
KAWASAKI KLR250. 1990 blue and white, 6000 miles. One owner from new. Never been off road. 12 months MOT. Excellent condition, £1250. Tel: 01200 445657.

BREAKING DT125LC lots of parts left, engine blown. Also wheels for KLX250 and some other parts. Tel: 0181 301 2913 (S.E. London).

HONDA XR250 1991 model (Q). T & T. Excellent condition. £1200 ono. Phone Russ on 01509 503327 (Leics).

DAVE COOPER MOTORCYCLE CARRIER (bolts to car tow bar) £49.50 new, used twice, now £40. Phone Mark on 01702 512010 (Essex).

FOR SALE 1989 KMX200. 18 inch back wheel. Spare 17 inch with road tyre. New knobblies. 'O' ring. Taxed & MOT. £975. Tel: 01457 872380.

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Tel: 01200 445657

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

Remember a few "Trails" ago I mentioned a TV programme where the good old Ordnance Survey were pledging to put back all the 'white' roads which have mysteriously vanished from their maps over the last thirty years? Well it looks as though the restorations have commenced. The OS are now approaching Local Authorities and asking them to supply details of all their unclassified roads. Knowing first-hand just how enthusiastic LA's can be with RoW matters this cannot exactly be described as a flying start but, it is a start. First sheet to be so updated and released on an unsuspecting public (to gauge reaction) will be 126 (Shrewsbury area). Any Group regularly using this sheet please monitor (and react?) on behalf of the TRF.

The words "Trail Rider" in our name leave little doubt as to our activity and it has been suggested that we perhaps change it to reflect more on our work in discovering new rights of way and preserving and fighting to keep lanes open for all users. Forget it! The 4WD guys have beaten us to it with a new national organisation called simply the 'Green Lane Association' or GLASS for short. Their aim is 'to promote interest in responsible driving on un-metalled roads and its complex associated issues'. They learn quickly!

I asked what had happened to the healthy controversy which used to display itself in Readers letters and got a (welcome) response from none other than Brian Thompson! Yes Brian we haven't had a good debate on tyres for quite a while and perhaps now could be the time with enduro bikes 'inventing' yet another tyre type. So which is it to be, Trail, Trial, Motocross or Enduro? Personally I think Brian is over-simplifying the matter and I never really considered the ugliness of a tyre to be important! In my experience a motocross tyre can be made to cause damage but a rider who has lost grip cannot help damaging a soft surface with a spinning tyre. Furthermore large trail bikes can quickly destroy the modern fragile trials tyre which is designed to do a very specific job on a very sophisticated machine. I'm sure I'm not the only one to have lost lumps of tread particularly where the bike is also used on tarmac. Not to mention cost. Brian, trot down to your dealer and price a modern trials tyre. At one time I could buy good used trials tyres for a tenner each but now they are so expensive they are no longer discarded so readily! Thank heavens for 'Norfolk Remolds'.

Finally, the Yorkshire Dales National Park has allegedly demanded a 'bond' of £9000 from the organisers of a mountain bike event called the 'Polaris Challenge' as insurance against damage to the RoW network. Interesting eh? Won't be long before a Rambler is glad to see the odd trail rider rather than hordes of mountain-bikers, 4WD's etc.

NETTLEBED

PS Anyone bought a copy of 'Trail Bike Magazine'? See elsewhere in this issue for a review.

YOUR INSERT

You will have noticed by now that this month's magazine has an insert - a recent edition of *Byway and Bridleway*, the Byways and Bridleways Trust's journal. Many of you will know about this already. Some of you subscribe individually, or as a TRF group, so please pass your extra copies on to somebody who might appreciate them. But, with the ever changing membership of the TRF, there must be some hundreds of people out there who have read the name, but know nothing of what the Trust is, or does.

The Byways and Bridleways Trust was formed in 1979 in the run-up to the legislation that became the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - and the efforts of the founders had a significant impact in stopping the threatened worst excesses of the anti-access tendency in Parliament. The Trust does not have 'members' as does the TRF and other groups like the RA and BHS. People and organisations subscribe to *Byway and Bridleway* which, since 1979, has developed into arguably the most informative publication on rights of way news, issues, law, policy, history and practice. You will not find anything about sprockets, chains, horseshoes, derailleurs or walking boots in B & B, but you will find a steady stream of information and guidance on how the "rights of way machine" ticks over. The Trust has subscribers from all interest groups: local authorities, walkers, horseriders, trail riders, 4 x 4s, just about everyone and anyone whose interest goes beyond merely using green roads. Look at it this way. If you could take the highway authorities and everyone else with a genuine interest in protecting green roads for all reasonable and responsible users, stir gently on a low heat and remove the more extreme elements, then you would probably end up with the BBT.

A year's subscription, which runs from the date you subscribe, costs £20 for individuals, with special rates for groups which want multiple copies. There are 10 issues a year and each issue ranges from 4-8 pages.

Alan Kind



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PUBLIC INQUIRY

(Second Bite)

Once again we (us TRF'ers) have an example of "money speaks".

In this case local residents and persons with vested interests raised somewhere in the region of £20,000, yes, 20 grand!, to fight some RUPP/Byway Reclassification Orders in the North Stoke area in the County of Avon. The outcome of the 9 day Public Inquiry was the DOE Inspector listened to the Temple (London) barrister @ £1000+/day, and a flock of solicitors, and modified the order so we now have potentially 12 new bridleways.

However, by the efforts of small gangs (it's got to be a "gang" if the tabloid Bristol press get their hands on the story - after all we do ride motorcycles, even if only occasionally) of Bristol Group members and the help of our professional friends, we now have the opportunity of a second Public Inquiry to reverse the modification and acquire 12 BYWAYS. But we do need some help from any TRF'ing motorcyclist who can turn up on the day - 12th September 1995 (10am) at North Stoke Village Hall just off the A431 Bristol/Bath road.

I am only too aware that Public Inquiries always start on a Tuesday at 10am and at least some of our members are in full time employment and have a little difficulty attending. But, if you want to carry on riding in the Bristol area (without the added aggravation of going to court for riding on a bridleway - and we might not all be as lucky as Gwyn Thomas?!) In the immortal words of all you sheep lovers - FOR FLOCKS SAKE turn up and give user evidence. Tell the boss your dear old white haired granny is on her death bed and has specifically asked to see her favourite grandson (or daughter?) get tooth ache, or possibly even, heaven forbid, book a day of your precious holiday entitlement (I did).

Just turn up, tell the Inspector that due to pressure of work you can only stay an hour and please can you give your evidence as soon as possible. For those who have never attended a Public Inquiry, it's nowhere near as formal as Magistrates or Crown Court (and I'm sure virtually everyone has had experience of the aforementioned even if only sitting as a juror?!) You don't have to swear on the Bible or anything like that and don't be put off if the Inspector looks like he's got an OBE, MRIN* (he probably has too). He's getting paid for being a public servant. *yes, what's an MRIN? - that will keep you guessing?

A lot of effort was put into the first P.I. and I'd hate to see all that work go to waste. Also, we don't want opposition to think that just 'cos they've got a few bob they can have their own private roads/bridleways. See you on the 12th.

D.C. Clegg, Bristol Group Chairman

SIDECAR SIDE SHOW

Oscar Wilde described fox-hunting as "the Unspeakable in pursuit of the Inedible", who said that trail riding using a combination was "doing the Impossible with the Unrideable", I know not.

The word "antics" seems to spring into the minds of those who have followed my not altogether unrideable Triumph outfit. One of the riders on a recent run said that he had stopped looking at the countryside because watching us was so entertaining!

Although a novice at green laning I am an old hand at chariots having learnt on a 650 iron head Triumph when my mates were riding around on Cubs and Bantams. (I still have the old Thunderbird, too!)

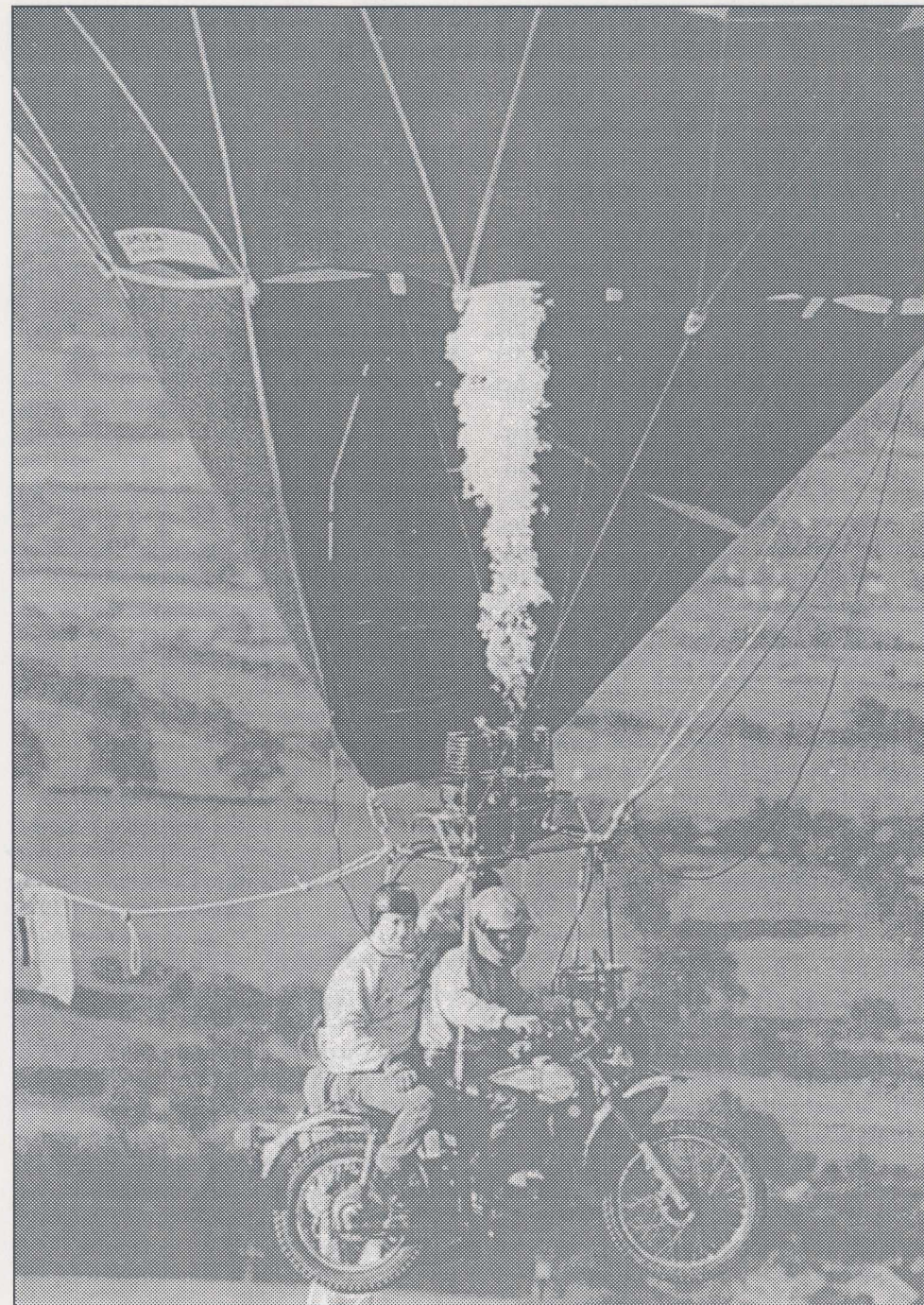
Riding the lanes on an outfit presents challenges not met on a solo. The most obvious one is the effect of a camber: riding along a contour with the chair up a slope can be quite difficult - as can riding with one track or the other in a deep rut left by a 4WD vehicle. Extra width is not usually a problem and at a pinch it only takes a few minutes to remove the chair. Now and again the third wheel helps - I've noticed on some muddy sections that solos tend to struggle where I can use more power without falling off! Although I do plenty of that too!

The 1973 500cc Triumph twin has been barely modified for chair work - just stronger rear springing and a guard round the brake lever. Standard gearing - always far too low for solo work - is about right for the sidecar. The heavy chromed mudguards have been replaced with cheap, expendable, modern plastic and a sump guard worthy of the description has been fitted. Much more could be done to make it function better but the compromise allows me to ride it solo if I wish and retains the classic character.

I have been out a couple of times with the Oxfordshire group and thoroughly enjoyed it. Trail riding is always fun - it's just more fun with an outfit!

John Hind, Thame, Oxfordshire

Please refer to piccy on page 7: The frame of John's Triumph has hooks which he says were originally intended for use in suspending the bike when transporting it by hot-air balloon. In case you think that is a tall "trail tale", here is the evidence.



NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

TWO CLIPPINGS FROM THE CRAVEN HERALD

M. E. Price is not a TRF member!

Motorcyclists have a raw deal

SIR - If Coun Shelagh Marshall (May 19) is confused by the term BOAT for a reclassified green road, she should study the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the Countryside Act 1968, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

This legislation provided that public highways previously classified as "roads used as public paths" were to be reclassified as "byways open to all traffic if carrying existing vehicular rights".

The Dales Park authorities admit the old county roads that run unsurfaced throughout the national park were not previously classified as RUPPs, and certainly some Dales roads, now tarmac motor roads, were unsurfaced at the end of the Second World War. These and other green roads would have been used by the tough old cars of the early motoring days, not just by the horse drawn carts mentioned elsewhere.

Coun Marshall does less than justice to the Trail Riders Fellowship, which

consists mostly of middle to later aged motorcyclists, not teenage tearaways. It has a serious Code of Conduct, promoting legal and responsible use of green roads, as well as the continued historical use of roads.

As regards objections to trail riders, my guess is that these objectors will be affluent Nimbys rather than Dalesfolk, whom I have usually found neutral to friendly towards reasonably behaved motorcyclists.

A great deal of nonsense has been said about alleged motorcycle damage to green roads. When many thousands of pounds can be spent repairing over use of ramblers' tracks, it should not be too much to ask that a few hundred pounds be spent on poor drainage, often the root of such damage.

Unlike the favoured ramblers, cyclists and horse riders, motorcyclists do pay for a road fund licence for the use of roads, green or otherwise.

M E Price, Heather Cottage, Farnhill,
Skipton, 2nd June 1995

Ramblers and Countryside

SIR - So M Innes (Letters June 23) thinks ramblers, cyclists and horse riders do not affect others' pleasure in the countryside.

What about the horse riders who, illegally, use the very narrow footpath between the side wall of my home and the wall of the adjoining woodland plantation?

What about the racing cyclists I

recently encountered charging along a local bridleway, heads down on dropped handlebars, obviously training for a track event? This is surely not the use to which the bridleway was intended to be put when cyclists were given legal use of these ways.

As for the ramblers, motorcycling and country loving friends of mine who lived for some years in a remote farmhouse

adjoining the Pennine Way above Swaledale had some highly unpleasant tales to recount about the antics of some Pennine Wayfarers, and no doubt the Dales farmers could add a few!

When all is said and done all countrygoers should behave with due consideration for other users, whether visitors or locals, while no-one has the right to ban anyone else just because he or she happens to dislike another's means of transport.

M Innes would appear to be guilty of the gross exaggeration so often employed by self styled environmentalists.

While watching an observed section in the long standing Allan Jefferies Motorcycle Trial in Wharfedale a year or two ago, immediately adjacent to the Stake green road, I counted in the space of two or three hours, some half dozen ramblers, a

couple of cyclists, a solitary motorcycle rider not involved in the trial and no horse riders at all - and this on a fine Sunday in mid-July.

Yet the Dales Park Authority, having taken over this old county road which it has managed to get reclassified as a byway open to all traffic, now states openly it is its policy to "monitor" such roads with a view to "managing" them for the class of countrygoer mostly using them, ie the favoured ramblers, cyclists and horse riders.

This also surely calls in question TRF officer Richard Dugdale's belief that the County Council will still be responsible for maintenance. My understanding is that maintenance responsibility will lie with the national park, along with that for footpaths and bridleways, and you can guess who will get the lion's share!

M E Price, Heather Cottage, Farnhill

Noisy sports 'have a right to use countryside'

*Commons committee finds little damage to environment, reports
Nicholas Schoon*

Members of Parliament yesterday spoke up for the rights of motorists and those who indulge in noisy sports to use the countryside.

The House of Commons' Environment Select Committee reported that it could find no conclusive evidence that the number of people visiting the countryside had grown significantly in the past few years.

And there was little sign of severe long term damage to wildlife and the environment by the heavy flow of visitors pouring out of towns. The many conflicts in the countryside over leisure pursuits were more often clashes of culture rather than disputes over real environmental threats, the MPs' report says.

Pursuits such as water skiing, motorbike scrambling, cross country four wheel drive motoring and clay pigeon shooting could be disruptive, and even destructive. "But I don't think you can ban this sort of activity from the countryside", the committee chairman, Andrew Bennett, said. "People will just go on doing it illegally".

Instead, the report calls on councils to encourage provision of space for the noisier sports away from the most scenic and prized countryside areas. It advocates voluntary codes of conduct and the solving of disputes between country visitors through voluntary agreements reached by their representatives, landowners and the authorities.

The MPs found no case for banning private cars from country roads in the most valued areas. They say that if some visitors

only want to look at rural scenery through a car window then they have every right to do so - elderly and frail people can only see the countryside in this way.

In a few of the most congested beauty spots in the national parks - the "honeypot" areas - there may be a case for extra high car parking fees. The report suggests that signposts on roads approaching the area should warn when car parks are full and point the way to alternative sites.

It also calls for a traffic restriction experiment, in which public transport is substituted for all private cars in one particularly popular location. Mr. Bennett suggested Surprise View at Watendlath, Cumbria, in the Lake District as an example.

The committee comes out clearly against the "leisure village" concept developed by firms such as Center Parcs, in

which large holiday complexes built in the middle of the countryside can only be reached by car. New leisure facilities should be as near as possible to urban areas and should be built on derelict land, or land of the least possible agricultural, wildlife or scenic value. They should be reachable by public transport.

Mr. Bennett said that many people who drove 20 miles out into the countryside did not do so to have an authentically rural experience - they would have a pub lunch, take a short walk by a lake or river, then go home.

Good urban parks could easily provide them with that sort of experience on their doorstep. The report warns against letting city parks, woodlands and open spaces become neglected and dangerous, because these can bring the countryside into the town.

The riders in the photo are: L. Barry Smith, and R. Dave Giles of the East Midlands club on a ride together along the Ridgeway.



Off-road freedom seekers: Motorcyclists on the Ridgeway near West Ilsley, Berkshire. The MPs say countryside disputes are clashes of culture.

TRAIL BIKE MAGAZINE REVIEW

I first saw TBM advertised in Motorcycle News about a month ago. In the seventies 'Bike' Magazine often ran very good Trail Riding articles as opposed to road tests on trail bikes. Since then however, save for one or two instances, our hobby has been sadly neglected by the motorcycling press so I eagerly searched the shelves of WH Smiths for the launch copy.

I nearly didn't find it - it is little bigger than our own Trail in format, though it did have a glossy cover with a colour shot of the latest Yam TTR250 splashed across it. I forked out my £1.50 and sat down for a read. Plenty of quantity, 76 pages in all including covers but the paper quality was little better than newsprint. The advertising manager is to be congratulated for he had managed to sell 20% of those pages to mostly relevant advertisers. The BMF were there but not the TRF!

A further 17 pages are devoted to 'The Trailbike Guide' an alphabetical list of all common and not so common trail bikes available. Although this is of little use and takes up almost a quarter of the mag it reads amusingly and will be extremely useful to anyone baffled by the difference between a WMX500DE and a DR650RSE.

So what of the contents proper? As I scanned the list of contributors for some familiar names only Paul Blezard and Dave Taylors rang any bells but then again they probably don't know me either! Having said that, both these gentlemen are extremely respected in the bike world though I confess the Editor, one Si Melber (an anagram perhaps) is totally unknown to me.

The Yam TTR250 test takes up six pages and is a really good read. The style may be a little 'racy' for some but it is just about the best trail bike test I have ever read with apt comment from Geraint Jones and a comparison with its obvious rival, the XR250.

Dave Taylor gets to tell us about his Triumph engined Greeves which in my heyday was a very desirable special and according to Dave is still well up to the job. And for those who like their trail bikes measured in cwts, rather than kgs you can read about the Cagiva Elephant and the BMW R100GS which included doing (and finishing) the Cambrian Rally! All good stuff and, in my opinion, streets ahead of the trivial tests often

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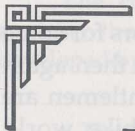
We welcome old members and new!

seen in the motorcycle press. There's even a test on a van! And why not? A lot of us own the damn things - what about trailers next?

But where do we ride these exotic machines? This is often where we have winced at the Press's attempts to convey the excitement of our hobby to the armchair masses, with photos of bikes on iffy lanes pulling wheelies and the like. 'The Rough Guide To Britain' is left in the safe hands of PNB this month in Hampshire. Paul makes it clear right from the start that this is a beginners trail ride and instructions are clear and punctuated with map refs and road numbers. There is no gung ho riding and novices are warned of the tricky bits. All good stuff to introduce raw beginners to trail riding if they cannot, or do not wish to, ride with a group.

To finish off there's an informed article on second hand KMX's, an amusing recollection of the Lands End Trial, a News page and a T-shirt offer. All in all a good effort and, apart from Motorcycle Sport, the only bike mag I've ever read from cover to cover!

But where were we?



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On the road to Morocco

Please refer to front cover picture

The first thing Dave and I did before setting out for our trail riding holiday in Morocco, was to make a list of everything we might possibly need to cover any contingency. Sunblock, water purifier tablets, salt tablets, insect repellent, moustache grooming kit, you name it, and if Boots sold it, we had it - you can't take risks in the Dark Continent you know.

So there we were on the first day, all geared up ready to go riding, secure in the knowledge that back at Marrakech the British Pharmaceutical Industries finest products were waiting to combat anything Africa could throw at us. As we loaded up the bikes and set off in the vans we looked forward to our first day out, the sun already high in a cloudless sky. Then after driving for 3.5 hours it began to dawn on us that all may not be what it seemed. After 5.5 hours and one lunch stop, all definitely was not as it should be.

"O" Level French is not too bad for asking directions to the Eiffel Tower but it found itself sadly lacking at this particular moment. Together with our guides "O" Level English the conversation went something like this;

Us:: Excuse moi Olivier (our guide) font nous a randonnee a moto aujourd'hui?

Olivier: Oui!

Us: Mais que a nous dormez?

Olivier: Ici!

Us: What! Tonight?

Olivier: Oui, trois nuits

Us: Oh bugger! The itinerary says we stay at Marrakech for three nights (I had given up on the French by now)

Olivier: The itinerary is wrong! (His English was better than my French)

Us: But everything, our passports, clothes, Diocalm, are 250 miles away!

Olivier: No problem, it is part of the adventure! (This was a phrase we were to hear a lot of later)

Anyway all we had was what we stood up in, eg: Alpine stars and riding gear which explains why I ended up wearing a Frenchman's underpants. (That's my story anyway).



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Other than this small problem which was really just down to a lack of communication between France and England (common enough over the years) the actual holiday was brilliant, with the riding (on XR600s) over all conditions such as desert scrub, alpine passes in the High Atlas, narrow goat tracks with shear drops, trials type rock gullies, river crossings, in fact everything you would want except bogs.

The French attitude to trail riding is much the same as their attitude to life really - "no problem", and while we were mainly using recognised routes, the odd excursion up the steps of the local market with donkeys and pots and pans flying about certainly livened things up.

Dust, especially over the fine talcum powder like sand, was sometimes a problem, with plenty of space required between bikes and filters being changed daily. The Moroccans were very friendly (though the market stall holders looked a bit miffed), seeming to spend all day sitting under trees supping mint tea while the women work in the fields and their sons herd the goats - not a bad life really.

We didn't see any other Europeans on our trip until we got back to Marrakech and it's difficult to imagine how else, other than by bike, you could experience what we did. 4 x 4s could certainly have used some of the routes but the narrow goat tracks would prove almost impossible.

Bikes, fuel, accommodation and flights were all included and I can recommend it to anybody but a reasonable level of competence in your riding would certainly help you get the best out of the holiday. Our guide - Olivier, certainly knew his way round and looked after us very well, even providing a day of jetskiing as an alternative.

The only problem is that trips of this sort give you the wanderlust, Dave and myself are already planning ahead and I won't make such a long list next time.

Patrick Bramman, E. Mids. Group

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GOLDEN HORSESHOE 1995

by Jacky German

"Rak-a-dag-a-dakka-dak" not the usual ringy tone of my happy little KMX but the sudden dreaded cry of a two-stroke in distress! This heart (and bank) breaking sound rang out in the night as I was pootling home from work on the Friday with nothing more stressful on my mind than two consecutive weekends on Exmoor - this first trail riding with the West Midlands TRF, the second marking and marshalling the route for the Golden Horseshoe Endurance ride.

The start and finish is based at Exford, a normally quiet, picturesque village in the heart of the moor, which by our return had been literally taken over by horses and their accoutrements. Every green space in the area housed a horsebox and the roads were teeming with beautiful ponies and the not so beautiful, but seemingly compulsory, four wheel drive vehicles in which the crew for each rider hurtles about to accessible points along the route to provide care and coolant for the horses.

The event took place on Monday and Tuesday which meant a general absence of the abundant, sometimes meddling, tourists found in the area at weekends, so most of our carefully placed markers were left in position when we checked the route very early on Monday morning. It is thrilling riding at this time of day - with impressively close sightings of buzzards I almost had to duck to avoid, and several groups of deer.

A problem reported later in the day (which turned out to be unfounded) on the northernmost part of the route meant another beautiful ride through spectacular moorland and coastal scenery, with the borrowed bike striking me as a much easier and more relaxed ride than the KMX, which always needs to be kept on the boil. The XR tackled the ford by Robbers Bridge bravely, only dampening my one leg in a panic dab which was probably unnecessary, and the next section was a tricky climb on a narrow, near vertical zig zag path. Sally and I both dropped our respective XR's exactly in stereo, which caused us such uncontrollable mirth that we took some time to get them upright again. Norman, who was ahead, assured us that he

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would have helped, but Sally had jokingly called up to him that we were stopping for a wee break, so he politely stayed out of the way (though he confessed later that he did have doubts about our sanity, as he reckoned that even a bout of chronic diarrhoea wouldn't have caused anyone in their right minds to stop on a climb of that degree!)

Dawn on Tuesday brought appalling weather and even my brand new Belstaff overtrousers were drenched right through by mid morning in the relentless rain. Visibility worsened and de-marking was a very damp task, made cold by the fact that we caught up with the last of the tired horses and had to wait for them to pass each marker. We took a break and walked in the mist to inspect a path where the team who'd marked the section had doubts about safety - and sure enough the narrow, hanging path was definitely moving as the weight of each hoof descended, but fortunately the surface held out and there were no mishaps.

A damp depleted bunch of us slowly finished the de-marking but back at the venue there was hot soup and some very favourable comments about the marking of the route from several riders, so it was nice to feel that our hard work had been appreciated.

I topped up the oil and returned the trusty XR to its rightful owner, well impressed with its stability and reliability overall. Of course there were one or two moments of doubt, for example when getting off to close gates I forgot the vast distance from toes to terra firma and had to lie it down as gently as possible. This

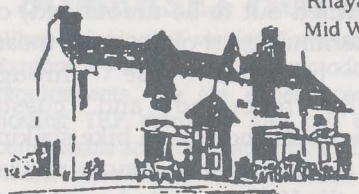
of course caused that old familiar 4-strokes reluctance to restart, even with such well tried tactics as throttle wide open. Getting a deep dropping kick is not easy on a camber for those of us with a small build, and it certainly had me extolling the virtues of a two stroke on these occasions, only to swing my opinion the other way on trickier sections where the front end is remarkably stable over rocks, and the low down power definitely makes life easier, not to mention the forgotten pleasure of engine braking on the steep downhill.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and my thanks go to Curly for the wildly trusting loan of the bike, to Tony for an equally trusting chance to try out his new KLX, and the rest of the team for a good time over the whole three days.

Jacky German

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... AND NOW THE BOOTS

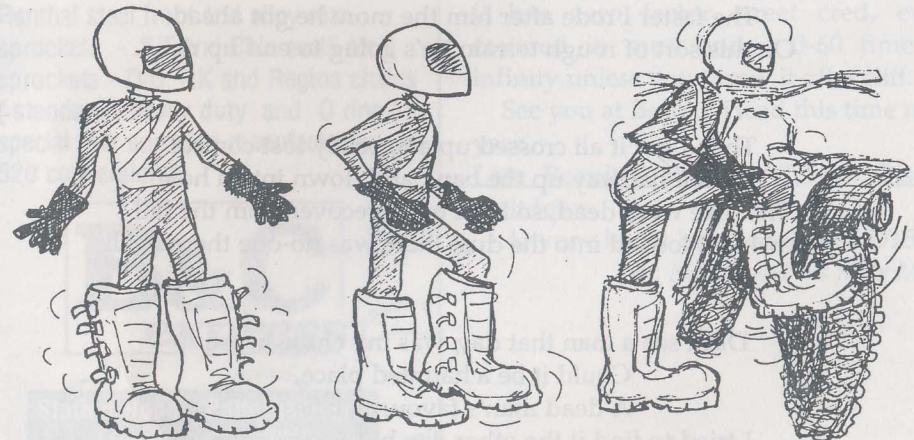
P.S. While enforced rest gives me the time to put pen to paper...

Following the comments in a recent edition of Trail may I also reiterate the benefits of a good pair of boots as opposed to wellies - steel toe caps give no protection in a 'twist' situation. Thankfully I still have both feet as I was wearing substantial motocross boots when I recently did a multiple fracture/dislocation injury, dropping the bike with my foot apparently twisting, as it hit the deck, under the engine, thereby cushioning the dear bike in its progress along the ground - NOT recommended even if you do value your paintwork and plastics!

One of the doctors has been entertaining (?!) me with tales of the Napoleonic wars, where this injury was commonly seen when soldiers' feet got twisted in the stirrup, presumably as their horses snuffed it. Fortunately medicine has come a long way since those days when the 'treatment' was mid-foot amputation without anaesthetic but with a comforting dip in boiling tar, which often failed to prevent gangrene, resulting in successive amputations further up the leg! Thankfully painkillers, pinning and plaster are now available, but BE WARNED, GET YOUR BIG BOOTS ON!

Jacky German

There are of course three main problems with wearing BIG BOOTS...



The first is doing them up, the second is walking and the third is getting your leg over!

THE DUST CLOUD

It was Summer '94 in the middle of June
I rode out alone on that hot sunny afternoon
The earth was dry as I looked for a lane
I thought to myself, "we could do with some rain!"

I took a left then I took a right
Up a narrow road, a rabbit took fright
Through a lazy river not too deep
The next hill I climbed was really steep.

I soon lost my direction as I rode along my way
I lost all sense of time as well, what a perfect day!
I turned into a lane and started having fun
Then I saw a cloud of dust blocking out the sun.

Thinking I could see a man sitting on a bike
I tried to get up closer but he rode off out of sight
The faster I rode after him the more he got ahead
On this sort of rough terrain he's going to end up dead.

Then I got it all crossed up and really lost control
I rode it halfway up the bank and down into a hole
The bike went dead, so I got up to recover from the fall
But when I looked into the dust there was no-one there at all.

Did I see a man that day, was my chase in vain?
Could it be a haunted place,
A dead man's favourite lane
I tried to find it the other day but I soon gave up
I might just end up like that man
Trapped in his lonely RUPP.

Martin Troake, West Somerset

OFF ROAD TEST - YAMAHA DT50 BITZA

Found in a greenhouse, this machine had all the extras we had come to expect on a secondhand DT50. Slick tyres, slim line (squashed) petrol tank, light weight chain and sprockets (mostly worn away) and a thick protective layer of 2-stroke oil. Our initial offer of just over half the price was accepted immediately - did we pay too much? Well it had 6 months MOT and tax.

Two tokens in the local pressure wash and a tin of hammerite sorted the cosmetics. A new set of points, tyres, chain sprockets and cables sorted the more important aspects.

How does it handle?

On road, you have to be careful not to be taken out from the rear. The maximum design speed of 30mph is more of a safety "Hazard" on today's roads. Off road, don't laugh - it goes quite well if you keep the engine in chainsaw mode. It got up the hill from Widenham to Rudloe (apart from the biggest step which I bottled out on). It's so light that you can always carry it if you get stuck.

Comparative Test - across Roundway and down Heddington Steps well, Mark on the DT50 left me standing or should I say lying in the mud after falling off the XT350 twice (2 up with trials tyres - we all have our excuses). It's surprising

just what you can do on a DT50, we are attempting the Phoenix Trial next weekend.

Down side, according to Mark, is that it has zero factor street cred, even covered in mud and a 0-60 time of infinity unless you throw it off a cliff.

See you at Beachy Head this time next year.

Late Result - Phoenix Trial - Piston meltdown

Anyone know how to set up a DT50?

Mr. Nastey and his mate Mark

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PERMISSION OR NOT?

We were marking the route for a long distance horse endurance event, when we were stopped by a house resident. She questioned our permission to ride over the hill. My colleague had one of the organisers' husband on the pillion, and he stepped forward to explain. He was not sure if we had permission, so was apologetic. To cut a long story short, he finished by saying "If we do not have permission, then it is a sin of omission, and not one of commission". That stopped her dead. Adapt it, and try it yourself! (We later confirmed that there was indeed a letter of permission for course-marking by motorcycle from the landowner - the National Trust!).

Quote from a 4 x 4 magazine from a letter by Green Lane Association (GLASS) member Richard Bridge to Hertfordshire County Council:

"where a body acting in a judicial or quasi-judicial (which may include administrative) capacity reaches a conclusion which is such that no reasonable body possessed of the facts could have reached that conclusion, then, no matter how sweeping the terms of the discretion conferred upon that body, that decision is susceptible of judicial review".

Maybe try this (when appropriate) too!

P.S. Any TRF members in GLEAM? Let me know.

Mark F. Holland, Glos. Group

LETTERS

DISTURBING COMMENTS

During a recent holiday in the Lake District I obtained a copy of the Lake District Guardian. There are some disturbing comments in this paper regarding rights of way and restrictions on motor vehicles in certain areas.

There is an organisation (quango?) called the Lake District Traffic Management Initiative which has been set up by the National Park Authority, Cumbria County Council, the Countryside Commission and the Cumbrian Tourist Board. Reading between the lines this seems to be yet another group of local vested interests determined to restrict as much of Cumbria as possible to the people who actually live there rather than considering the needs and requirements of the millions of visitors each year without whom Cumbria's economy would cease to exist.

Suggestions made by LDTMI include the following:

- 40mph speed limit on the B5284 through Crook
- residents only parking in Elterwater with a 20mph speed limit. This scheme will

have NO warning yellow lines so BEWARE! This is a good way to raise extra revenue by means of indirect taxation (parking fines). How long before they introduce it elsewhere?

- most ominous for that group of hard bitten anti-social eco-criminals known as motorcyclists is a ban on vehicles on the unsurfaced lanes between Tilberthwaite and Little Langdale.

As usual they also want to encourage people to use public transport. Have these Cumbrian NIMBYs ever tried to get around by bus and train? Do they realise just how impractical and inconvenient public transport actually is? Not to mention expensive - running a Cadillac is cheaper than going everywhere by bus and train!

Not that these public sector champions of a public transport controlled Cumbria (next bus to the Lake in 30 mins - lift your own luggage on and NO - we don't have any change facilities - correct money only or no ride) have to worry about parking. Visit any premises occupied by any public authority and just look at the number of free to employee parking spaces adjacent to the buildings.

In the Lake District Guardian there is an interview with John Toothill, Lake District National Park Officer. Mr. Toothill comes across not only as a NIMBY but also something of an ecological and recreational fascist. In other words - if your ideas of enjoyment in the Lake District don't coincide with his ideas - YOU ARE OUT OF LUCK!

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"Quiet enjoyment" is Mr. Toothill's catchphrase and this activity - or activities - must take precedence over all other activities - no matter how much this may inconvenience or upset people. Mr. Toothill wants total control of his little empire. He wants control of footpaths, non-metalled rights of way (bye-bye Lake District Trail Riding) and of the Lakes themselves.

Why doesn't he just say, that, unless you come to the Lakes by train or bus and then only want to walk on the fells - preferably wearing a gag to ensure you don't speak and spoil the "quiet enjoyment" - then stop at home!

How would he like it if Manchester City Council stopped countryside residents coming to Manchester by their chosen means of transport?

One question - has he, or any other Cumbrian NIMBYS, ever been to the heart of the Lake District on a Bank Holiday, or at weekend or in the summer months? Where are all these people wanting "quiet enjoyment"? If he would open his eyes and stop listening to the vehicle haters of the green movement he would see that for every one person actually going walking "on the fells", there are at least 100 who come for the social life - shopping, eating, pubs, watersports or just generally enjoying the atmosphere of places like Bowness, Windermere and Ambleside on a busy holiday afternoon or evening.

Mr. Toothill - these people spend MONEY. Walkers DON'T! Trail riders buy fuel, oil, food, drinks, etc. **Walkers just walk!**

Reading interviews with people like Mr. Toothill makes me more and more aware just how much we have to fight people like him and all the ecological fascists who would see all motorised vehicles banned from green lanes, banned from city centres. And then banned altogether.

Paul Atherton, Ribble Valley Group

CONTINUING TO TALK SENSE

It was good to hear from Brian Thompson (TRAIL No. 203) continuing to talk sense. His views compliment the letter from Bill Kershaw (TRAIL No. 198). We must heed carefully the words of wisdom written by our green laning elder statesmen. I certainly endorse their opinions and would add that as indicators are now a legal requirement on post 1986 motorcycles (MOT regs) we should be seen with indicators on our trail bikes.

It was interesting to note whilst on a trail riding visit to the Isle of Man, April '95, that the green lane network is being increased. It is well worthwhile buying the latest edition OS Landranger Sheet 95. Many of the lanes are now displaying Greenway Road signs which carry a 0.5 ton weight limit. The original horse and motorcycle signs are being left to complement the new signs. Are the I.O.M. rights of way authorities once again showing us the way forward?

I am also concerned with the continued media obsession of showing any off road (and frequently road) motorcycle pulling a gigantic wheelie. I have recently written to MCN Bike and Motorcycle Sport. The latter, until recently, projected a mature, middle of the road viewpoint. Frank Melling testing Suzuki's 250 two stroke trail bike (July '95) treats us to a mega jump and a five foot high wheelie. Surely someone of his age and off road experience should be furthering and projecting our image, not damning it.

Bob McConnell

No more soggy maps?

Did you know that you can waterproof your maps? Nikwax the waterproofing specialists, have produced a product called 'Map Proof'. It is water based and applied with a cloth (could play havoc with your non-permanent markings!). A 125ml bottle costs £3.15 and is sufficient for five O.S. maps. It sounds pretty useful; if anyone decides to give it a whirl, let me know the results.

Bill Riley

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