

GROUPS

BLACK COUNTRY

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

BRISTOL

George Pritchard, Tel: 01761 452606
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
2ns Tuesday, Derby Arms Hotel, Witherslack, Nr. 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, 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

Wayne Little, Tel: 01452 611735
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

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, 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
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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, Woolston, 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

JANUARY, 1996

No. 209

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

EDITOR: Mick "Nettlebed" Pedley.



Weaver Hills, Staffordshire.

G.C. Bower - Nottingham.

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All Contributions to the Editor Please keep it short and sweet!
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HONDA XR250RM 1991. All original. "H" reg. T & T. 2 owners, £1675. Part ex. newer XR600? Tel: Sam on Farnham (01252) 711578.

WANTED Fuel tank for Yamaha XT350. Colour unimportant, but must be relatively dent free. Tel: 01222 223185 Cardiff.

PLEASE CAN ANYONE HELP ME? I need an XL185/125 engine, in any condition, or in bits. Cash waiting. Tel: Tim 01229 889488 (after 6pm). YAMAHA XT350 1989 model. New plastics and seat cover. Great motor. VGC £1000. Tel: 01327 702541.

HONDA XL185 "V" reg. in full trail trim. 12 volt Zeno lighting needs no battery. Complete with all original standard bits, spare rear wheel etc. 12 month MOT, excellent trail condition throughout. The Editors spare bike and pride possession. £560. Tel: 01200 445657. Can Deliver. YAMAHA SEROW Mk1 (kickstart only version). "F" reg. Full engine overhaul 1500

miles ago. Stainless respoke at same time. Recent enduro tyres. Long tax and MOT. MPH speedo fitted, carrier fitted, handlebar heaters fitted, 520 "o" ring chain kit. The only sensible replacement for the XL185. £1400 ono may take XL185, XR200 or similar 4T as px. Money required by poor student who will be very sad to see this bike go. Contact Garry on 0421 004639.

COMING late December, early January, two Electric Start SEROW 225s. These bikes should be real crackers because our agent in Japan has given a good price for them. Year will be 89/90 and colour either Green/White or Red/White. Should sell between £1700/1800, depends now on exact condition and mileage which I don't know yet. If you're interested then get your name down. I am strictly first come first served and the last two were never advertised! Two more expected later in January but no details yet. Rod Butterworth Voice/FAX 01538 387918 or 01538 385538 in evenings.

FOR SALE SIDI motocross boots size 8½, good condition. Yam XT350 inlet manifolds. Reasonable offers. 01 937 583140 (West Yorks).

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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

Happy New Year! I feel that we start 1996 stronger, as an organisation, than ever before.

We have as strong an executive committee as at any time in the past, heading a network of Groups made up of similarly experienced and enthusiastic volunteers as ANY organisation could wish for - no matter what their objectives.

In the past we (that's the Royal 'we' by the way - I've done little, bar ride and bang the word processor keys!) have successfully fought off many and varied attempts to curb our legitimate rights. Yes, there have been losses, that's life but make no mistake about it, we are a nationally known and respected body - thanks to your efforts - though not necessarily loved by everyone!

When we sometimes appear to have been 'forgotten' by CoCo, (or some similar outfit, who should know better), when preparing ROW studies etc., I am now confident enough in the TRF to know that this is deliberate rather than remiss - why prod the sleeping lion if you can tiptoe quietly around him?

And this is surely our strength. Let no closure go unchallenged, no anti-trail riding press go unanswered and no rambler left in any doubt as to our right to ride (but correct him politely of course!)

With organisations such as the Countryside Movement, the 4WD organisations

and the Mountain-Bikers we will need to make important decisions about who are our allies and who are our adversaries and be aware that we have few friends in high places. So far, we have managed to stand alone to some extent but can we continue to do so?

In 1996 some of you will put in more than your fair share on behalf of the rest of us. You at least deserve our enthusiastic support - at meetings, at public enquiries, sometimes in court and of course on the trail!

Most of all in 1996, have fun, enjoy your riding and keep writing to TRAIL with your exploits, opinions and even your moans - otherwise you'll have to read about mine!

NETTLEBED

PS It's Coast to Coast time again. Post your cheque as soon as possible because it is bound to be over subscribed and it's first come first served.

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INTRODUCTION

My name is: Tony Stuart
and I live at: "Cambrea"
Worthy Hill
Trebetherick
Wadebridge
Cornwall
PL27 6SG

Tel/Fax: 01208 862960
Mobile: 0831 467273

I am a retired furniture haulage contractor, having run my own business in Nottingham until a few years ago, when we moved to Cornwall. Both our children are now grown up and have left home and we have two grandchildren.

I initially joined the TRF in 1971 and have been a member, on and off, ever since. Joined the Cornwall Group in 1989. They originally made me their RoW Officer, a position that I was subsequently happy to pass on when I became Cornwall Chairman last year. Also last year the South West Regional Group elected me as their Chairman in my absence from their meeting! (So be warned what can happen if you miss meetings!)

The four assets that I believe I bring to the National TRF Chair are:

1. Quite a lot of TRF experience.
2. Ideas - I have quite a few.
3. Enthusiasm - and long may it last!
4. And lastly - but possibly most importantly - time. Being retired I can spend more time at my desk and visiting people or meetings both inside and outside normal working hours.

My basic ambitions for the TRF are the same as when I first joined - namely to have FUN riding my motorbike and to have the opportunity to do so for many years to come.

I believe that if trail riding is to continue in Great Britain the TRF must grow bigger, to give us more political "clout", and become much more widely known in all circles, including National Government. We are regarded and respected not only as the Governing Body of Trail Riding, but also as experts on access to the countryside by all who know us - but not enough people do!

So - just two basic ideas - for all of us to have FUN and to maintain the opportunity through wider recognition and respect.

I am very much looking forward to my term in the Chair and hope that at

RoW NEWS

RoW NEWS JANUARY 1996

When a Planning Inspector at a Public Inquiry (PI) makes a decision on a road used as a public path (RuPP) that it should be reclassified as a bridleway, this does not extinguish the actual carriage rights that exist. Neither does the subsequent Definitive map modification order made by the Highway Authority alter the actual rights. The Inspectors decision is limited to how the way is shown on the Definitive Map. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 s56(1) basically states "... a bridleway on the definitive map establishes, conclusively, that at the relevant date the public had bridleway rights. This is without prejudice to any question that the public had at that date any other (i.e. vehicular) rights...

At a PI the decision for BOAT status should be based on the probability, not conclusivity, that vehicular rights exist. So if one is subsequently stopped and reported for riding a RuPP which has been reclassified as a bridleway (or any other bridleway for that matter) it would be for the prosecution to establish beyond reasonable doubt that the route ridden by the accused was only a bridleway or footpath.

However in practice a magistrate would think that since a proper PI had already considered the evidence and decided upon a definitive bridleway, the accused had no good reason for thinking the Inspector had got it wrong, *ipso facto* he is Guilty!! Although it does not make case law, the recent magistrates case reported in October's TRAIL on the Bevington Waste bridleway suggests that a solid backup of documentary evidence is required to avoid conviction.

As TRF members we only ride what we believe to be legal carriageways anyway. As per the Code of Conduct. But that simple statement covers a whole morass of maps, legal orders, tithes, enclosure awards of which many TRF members are unfamiliar.

On a pragmatic angle, one must judge if it is worth the potential hassle of being reported for riding such a lane. On the plus side only a uniformed Police Officer has the authority to stop a moving vehicle. But if you stop voluntarily to

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talk to someone (maybe he is standing in your way!) and he then waves a warrant at you, you're potentially a recipient of a summons. Maybe the statement,

"...I am not obliged to stop for you since you are not a uniformed

Police Officer, but I believe I am riding on a legal carriageway, g'day..." and riding off, is the best tactic. Anyone can easily report your number to the Police, especially so after the weather has been dry. Think about it!

To conclude, before riding a "vehicular bridleway" or a "vehicular footpath" be pretty damn sure that you have more than an old OS map with a felt pen mark as evidence.

Me? I'm lucky enough to have a good selection of BOATs and unsurfaced UCRs to ride in Kent. But a short part of the Pilgrims Way is a definitive bridleway. We ride it because it has heaps of documentary and historic evidence proving carriage rights. Other parts of this ancient green lane are variously, BOAT, RuPP, and UCR. I think that is pretty conclusive.

POWYS

Charlie Morriss tells me that a HA80 s116 threat to extinguish vehicular rights of the U264 and U266 near Trecastle was adjourned from 30th November. Hopefully they will ditch the proposal since the CC did not seem to think we used it?

KENT

Following increased 4WD use in the Ashford area several green lanes are under the process of being surfaced. Byway AE563 at Ruckinge is almost passable by saloon car. Fortunately the surface is based on loose road planings so time and nature should return its rustic appearance. It makes me think that a careful balance needs to be made with "improvements" so as not to lose the character of our green lanes.

SUFFOLK, NORFOLK AND ESSEX

The only TRF representation in East Anglia is the Suffolk Group. They have enough to do with that county. We no longer have an Essex or Norfolk Group. Anyone in those areas may like to contact me about what is (or is not) going on. We could bring this up at the East Midlands Regional meeting scheduled for the 9th March 1996 at the Rutland Sailing Club, Rutland Water. Jeff Ward is the contact (01536) 770990.

CHESHIRE

The Cheshire Group is asking for assistance with RuPP reclassifications in the county and Stockport MBC areas. Several green lanes are being proposed as bridleways. Hopefully LARA will be able to give some support but as normal local user evidence is needed at the PIs scheduled later this year. Geoff Bostock (01614) 569631 is the local contact.

NEXT MONTH

Fed up with your favourite RuPPs being incorrectly reclassified as bridleways. In December 1995 users were invited to the DoE/Planning Inspectorates HQ in Bristol for a liaison meeting. Cages were rattled, not just by the motorised vehicular users either.

Steve Neville, National RoW Officer

SUSTAINABLE

Sustainable, the latest word to make an impact on our hobby, a word about reducing the impact of leisure on the environment.

The House of Commons Environment Committee recently reported on "THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF LEISURE ACTIVITIES".

The Countryside Commission appointed consultants to appraise "THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PLANS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK. (YDNP)".

The Journal of the Byway and Bridleway Trust No. 8 1995 printed a very useful summary of the recommendations and conclusions of the environment committee and SUSTAINABLE occurs several times, eg. "sustainability of the route". "one of a limited number of sustainable routes where off road driving might be managed"; "investment in good practice which is sustainable"; "businesses selling 4WD vehicles are training drivers on routes which cannot sustain such use".

These few extracts should not leave us thinking the environment committee have it in for Trail Riders, the first quote: "sustainability of the route" is extracted from a discussion on Long Distance Paths. They express particular concern about high levels of use and the estimated £7 million pounds spent on repairing the Pennine Way (a footpath) plus an ongoing annual cost of £750,000.

However, it will certainly do us no harm to embrace the idea of sustainability and the West Yorkshire Group of the TRF discussed the matter at a recent meeting. We are all aware of routes which show more evidence of our passing than others and perhaps we could, when planning our day out, consider what impact we will have on

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the environment. We may decide to avoid some routes in wet weather, on others reversing the direction in which we use a lane may go a long way towards reducing the impact we have.

With this in mind the West Yorkshire Group would like riders to exercise care over the use of the HORSE HEAD PASS from Halton Gill to Raisgill in the YDNP. Our advice is to use this road from South to North, the climb from Halton Gill has a good firm base and when dropping down to Raisgill from the top it is tricky but possible to ride the correct line. Unfortunately, when using the route in the other direction from Raisgill to the South, some riders of more limited ability have taken to riding up the moorland. We would request that those who choose to ride in this direction stick to the original line, hone their skills and enjoy the challenge.

We would also recommend that GREAT WOLD is ridden from North to South and that, in the absence of walkers, riders use the artificial path, which has been installed to prevent further erosion, as they descend to Ribblehead and the welcome at the Station Inn.

Finally, a couple of quotes from the sustainability appraisal of the YDNP.

The Problem:

"They (the consultants) pointed out that there are many places in the Yorkshire Dales National Park where the level of use exceeds that which the natural surface can withstand, resulting in a degraded environment and a degraded experience for the user. This is unsustainable if the excess of use over capacity is allowed to continue".

The Solution:

"Managing demand to levels within the capacity of the network in its natural state, or with partial reconstruction to improve weak parts of the network."

Dave Loney

YORKSHIRE-CHEVIOTS RUN

If you're looking for an adventurous trail ride, TRF member Martin Kirk of Biketours Scotland is organising a three day ride from Yorkshire to the Scottish Borders over this year's May Day Bank Holiday.

Starting near Grassington on Saturday 4th May the run will go north through the Yorkshire Dales, across the North Pennines and on through Northumberland and the Cheviots to finish in Jedburgh on Monday 6th May. Overnight stops will be made near Appleby, Hexham and Jedburgh, and a support vehicle will carry luggage etc. to the next destination each day.

A total of 12 places are available and cost including two nights bed and breakfast, one night bed, breakfast and evening meal and the return of bikes and riders to the start is £149 for owner riders or £249 including bike hire.

Further details are available from Martin Kirk at 2 Rothie Vale, Rothienorman, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 8XE. Tel/Fax: 01651 821443.

If there are any points you would like to discuss please get in touch.

Martin Kirk

NOTICE

CUMBRIA GROUP NEW VENUE AND TIME

As from January 1st 1996, the Cumbria Group will meet on the second Tuesday of the month in The Derby Arms Hotel, Witherslack at 8pm. (The Derby Arms is just off the A590 between Kendal and Lindale).

SNIPPET SEEN IN RAMBLING TODAY

...The Ramblers must now campaign for OS maps to show all unclassified county roads.

• Tony Drake, Ramblers' Executive Committee member, notes that 22 white roads on which the OS has information have been omitted from the new Dolgellau Sheet.

Sent in by Mr. S. Moss, Chingford, London

MARKED UP MAPS

Well folks there's some really good news and some really good news. To all you folks out there past and present TRF members with maps marked up by, now this is the tricky bit, any of our national RoW Officers or past regional RoW Officers what you actually hold is a research document showing everything that HAS been a road.

The vehicular network of green lanes is changing all the time, both closures and upgrades opening up new areas, old white roads missed off current maps being rediscovered and of course downgrades, closures and diversions.

So if you wish to be certain that what you are using is legal either by inclusion on maps held by County Councils or weight of evidence you have two options, check with the RoW Officer currently in charge of the area you are using or, do some research of your own to find if the lanes you are using carry vehicular rights.

Either way, to continue to use lanes on maps marked up as recent as three years ago invites at best trouble at worst prosecution unless you keep in touch with RoW Officers.

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HELMET TEST

KIWI "City"

Let me get this straight - I'm a full face helmet fan. I've been knocked off by daft car drivers on several occasions and so value that extra degree of safety offered, but ...

Last Summer I'd had enough of being cooked, plus because of afore mentioned accidents my neck is weakened and I find it a pain to wear a heavy full face lid.

So after much shopping around I settled on an open face lid - purely for trail riding you understand?

I bought a Kiwi 'City' (model: K485) for £85.

Endearing features: lightweight, offers full neck movement, brilliant peripheral vision, excellent flip up visor - easy to use and notched for height adjustment, peak protects the main vision area of the visor when flipped up, car seat belt style push buckle on chin strap, very stylish and ultra modern look without being garish - would look just as at home when riding your BMW or BSA Goldie as when out trail riding where it is ultra rambler friendly in appearance.

The only let downs: wind noise is excessive, but on a still day is bearable up to speeds of around 65mph. This helmet is not rated for competition use.

My verdict: it's so comfortable to use that I've not worn my full face helmet since I bought the Kiwi City! Motorcycling is a joy again, I use this helmet for commuting, touring and trail riding. I've owned over ten helmets and tried many others - this one beats the lot.

Garry Watson, Bradford

NOTE FROM RETIRING SEC.

A Happy and Prosperous New Year
to All.

Thanks to all TRF workers and
supporters especially Jo.
Garry Watson, ex-TRF Sec.

ASTUTE EDITORIAL

TIMES 17/11 RURAL RIGHTS (Editorial)

The challenge facing the Countryside Movement

The launch of the Countryside Movement yesterday added a welcome voice to the debate on the future of rural Britain. Headed by Sir David Steel, the objective of this new pressure group is to represent the interests of the countryside in Westminster, Whitehall and Brussels, as well as to the media and public. It aims "to protect country life from its detractors and to promote good practice in all aspects of countryside management". Few would quarrel with such an objective. The more interesting question is why such a body is felt to be necessary.

It is clear that the wish to defend blood sports has played an important part in this venture. Hunting enthusiasts are well aware of the difficulties they face if Labour gains office; even on the Tory back benches, support for fox-hunting is no longer as reliable or visceral as it used to be. The new body - a coalition of existing countryside groups backed by sympathetic businessmen - will doubtless make a strong case for the defence of this traditional English liberty.

Yet the Countryside Movement is capable of being much more than a single-issue lobby group. There is a whole range of problems which it can usefully address, some of them raised by last month's White Paper on rural England. Country dwellers face rising house prices, poor quality public transport, declining agricultural employment and general degradation of their environment. They resent the encroachments of urban culture and Brussels alike. The movement claims that an area of countryside five times the size of Watford is urbanised every year. There could be no better moment for the emergence of a lively new representative for those affected by this process.

The founders of the movement recognise

the scale of the challenge facing them. The lobby for animal rights and against hunting and livestock husbandry has never been stronger. Between them, the League Against Cruel Sports and the International Fund for Animal Welfare are thought to raise £50 million a year in this country. The demonstrations against veal trucks at Shoreham and Brightlingsea have won unprecedented publicity for this already powerful lobby. Once the preserve of anarchists and left-wing extremists, animal rights campaigning has become a respectable pursuit for middle-class city dwellers who find the tough realities of rural life and farming morally shocking.

In large part, it is alarm at this new moral ascendancy that has prompted rural groups to join forces. Angling's governing bodies have tended to distance themselves from the pro-hunting lobby. But recent physical attacks on salmon fishermen by activists have persuaded anglers that they have more in common with huntsmen than they thought. The issue of animal rights is polarising British opinion to an extent that could not have been foreseen five years ago. The worst prospect is that it will become to Britain what abortion is to America: a moral problem that provokes blind fury, rancour and sometimes violence.

This should be avoided at all costs. The management of the countryside and the nation's farms raises important ethical issues. But they must not be resolved by intimidation, clamour and moral hysteria. Nor is it healthy for the debate to be dominated by one side, as it threatens to be. In this sense, the launch of the Countryside Movement may be as good for democracy as it promises to be for rural people.

The editorial in the December issue TRAIL was astute.

I enclose a press cutting which tells more about the emergence of the "Countryside Movement". No lightweight this organisation. To be headed by Sir David Steel, it's aim is to represent the interests of the countryside in Westminster, Whitehall and Brussels, as well as to the media and public. Aims that appear to reflect those of the Countryside Commission. Isn't it confusing?

There can be no doubt that the group

anticipates a Labour government and the threats that would bring to what are regarded as traditional countryside activities of the hunting, shooting and fishing varieties. It recognises the damage being done to democracy by intimidation, clamour and moral hysteria created by present day single issue pressure groups.

If the "Countryside Movement" can bring some balance back into the debate then as trail riders we should welcome it.

Geoff Wilson, TRF, Cumbria Group Deputy Chairman, LARA

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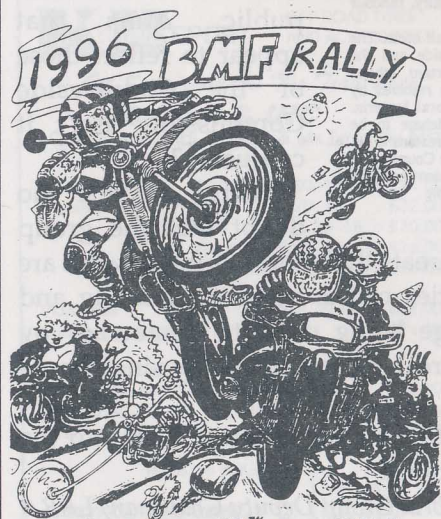
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You get a 'T' shirt to prove that you did it and run leaders also get a free sweatshirt.

There are just 2 conditions of entry. You must be a current paid up member of the TRF and your bike must be road legal.

ENTRY FORM FOR Coast-to-Coast '96

This event will run from Scarborough to Hawes and from Hawes to Morecambe on the weekend of 11th and 12th of May 1996. All riders will receive a T-shirt and run leaders will receive a free sweatshirt. Anyone else requiring a sweatshirt can buy one for £12.

- Places will be limited and will be on a first come first served basis.
- Any profit made goes to the TRF.
- Don't forget you must be a paid up member of the TRF and your bike should be road legal.

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MACHINE TRF MEMBERSHIP NO.

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Please indicate below which group you think you belong in. It is best to be honest as your weekend might not be as enjoyable if you have to push yourself too hard.

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DATES FOR THE DIARY 1996

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT
DATES FOR 1996

TRF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETINGS 1996

Saturday 24th February Saturday 1st June
Saturday 7th September Saturday 30th November

TRF NATIONAL AGM 1996

Saturday 26th October

NB This date does not clash with the WSM Beach Race or the Scott Trial. So there's no excuse not to put this date in your diary right now.

At the moment, these meetings are all scheduled to be held at the National Motorcycle Museum, Crows Nest Suite, which by popular request and as the name implies, will be above ground and have windows to look out of! All starting at 10.30am.

GROUP RETURNS

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, to those Groups who have already sent me their 1996 Committee Member listings. Please keep them coming. I will be amending the TRF data base with this information so that Year Book data will be readily to hand and to help with Group administration.

While on the subject of TRF data base - actual motorcycle information (make and type). Not wanting to abuse my position, but there are at least 20 XT600 owners in the TRF and I am surprised that someone would not like to buy a XT600 rear wheel, respoked with HD spokes, brand new sprocket and with a very good tarmac type tyre. I am open to offers as its taking up valuable room in my shed. Will deliver to next Exec. Meeting - so yet another good reason to come!

For all you good TRF'ers who are disappointed that the abbreviated minutes of the November 1995 Exec. Meeting are not published in this edition of TRAIL, as promised, I apologise. But Mary Stevens made such a good job of the "minutia" of the meeting and in such detail, that the task of condensing 4 pages of A4 into a page of A5 for TRAIL is a lot more complicated than anticipated - that is, if I'm not to offend anyone and the minutes are to still reflect the meeting. If anyone wants the full and unabridged edition of the minutes please send me an SAE and I will endeavour to send you the draft edition by return.

D.C. Clegg, National Secretary

WAINWRIGHT - PART 4

FROM PINEAPPLES TO PENNY FARTHING

We had to stretch our tankful to over 250km on Sunday, as the only outback pump we saw was having a day of rest. But, at only 3 quid a stop, who can blame it? That evening, we found ourselves in an immaculate game lodge on a 20,000 acre family farm. The Hazzards were sound as a pound and had lots of time for us. As usual, too much good food and clean, warm accommodation. At 9 the next morning, George collected us in an open topped Land Cruiser - we spent the day in an old established wild game reserve the size of our Lake District - a maze of 4WD tracks and only one building, the smart, inexpensive Hill Top Rest House.

We had our experienced man to ourselves and he responded superbly to our interests. Apart from countless strange creatures - such as termites, vultures, warthogs and giraffes - we were close to four of the "Big 5" - Elephants, Water Buffalo, White Rhinoceros and most exciting, a leopard stalking a Nyala Bull! These were NOT tame animals. We were most privileged: we saw other guides thrashing round with clients at sundown still looking for an elephant or big cat. For us, back to a big feed and good sleep to be wakened at sun up by migrating birds.

Today, we went aquatic - with George again - to St. Lucia Crocodile Farm; then onto miles and miles of clear beach of the Indian Ocean; later onto False Bay and families of hippos, big crocs and African fish eagles. Before the day was over, we had hands on experience of pineapple growing and sisal being treated in a factory for rope making. We learnt lots about sugar cane growing and were still talking at midnight. This massive stretch of land was 'broken' by Peter Hazzard's Grandma in the 1920's - a powerful woman!

Wednesday morning, a long back road through miles of over grazed tribal homelands, led us via a direct, deserted tarmac strip to the high veldt interior. Have you heard of Blood River? Not much there now, but 15 miles down a dirt track is a most intriguing monument in cast steel, bronze plated: a full sized defensive circle, or Laager, of 64 ox-drawn trek wagons. In December 1838, 650 Boer Voortrekkers defended this site near a river on a broad plain between hills, against 12,000 fighting Zulus. 3,000 were killed - 1,000 of them in the river. The bloody slaughter and intrigue of Zulu wars went on another 40 years yet.

An hour or so later we arrived at Penny Farthing - settled 140 years ago by Foy Vermaaks' ancestors. We were to sleep in 'The Fort', near a eucalyptus tree festooned with busy, weaver bird nests. This stone built, windowless blockhouse was where the family slept during the Zulu conflicts.

Hands up anyone who knows what is a CYCAD? In South Africa it's the Koi Carp of the plant world. Five characters - previously unknown to each other - a Botanist, an Architect, a Surgeon, an Engineer and a Scrapman - had assembled at Penny Farthing to invest at the sale of a 90 year old collection, at a remote hill farm by the Buffalo River. In the morning, we Funduro'd: to view and be educated -

then, to the sale in a church hall. One plant, of 250 sold for 18,000 Rand - £3000! When they chopped off all the leaves - to transport it - it looked no better than an overgrown pineapple!

Many miles of track took us onto the famous battlefield of ISANDLWANA - when in January 1879, between 2 sphinx-shaped hills, a Zulu army wiped out a British army column - which wasn't laagered, so couldn't defend itself. Later the same day, at Rorkes Drift, 8km away across the Buffalo, 150 Brits held off 4,000 Zulus and won 11 VC's. Have you seen the Michael Caine film Zulu? We were still there when the sun went down at 5pm and many miles of unknown track over a spectacular ridge, back to the Fort, to hear humerous post mortems on the Cycad sale.

In two breathtaking weeks - on a good bike - we hadn't given a thought to England. It's Friday morning and hard to believe that within 24 hours, we'd be home, wondering where all our grass had gone: 30 cattle and 400 sheep to feed.

First, a half day blast through the ecological disaster area of Tugela Ferry and Keates' Drift, to give the F650 back to Gail and Stuart at BIKETREK. It had never missed a beat in 2,200km - on all grades of road. It always felt safe and comfortable for both of us and carried all we needed. We rode in lightweight walking boots, jeans and Goretex jacket (with occasionally a fleece lining). We took our own helmets and only wore waterproof leggings once - after all, it's winter down there. The weather was mainly dry high pressure with clear skies and 20 to 22 degrees

daytime temperatures. Talk to different people and all will say a different time of year is best. I'd bet that any time of year is good in South Africa.

There may be political unrest in parts of the country - there is in Leeds and Bradford, if we believe the papers. We didn't see any problems - only friendly and helpful folk. There were 3 days when we didn't use the bike at all. Wendy generally preferred the off road rather than the tarmac, as there was lots to see and more time to see it.

You owe it to yourselves - get there, before it's spoilt. The pound converts very well. After you've bought your air ticket and given BIKETREK a few quid for the PERSONALISED holiday of a lifetime, it's hard to find anything else to spend money on.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Annual reminder - if you would like to help with PR please put your name on your annual group return as Group PR Officer - you do not have to be voted in at your group's AGM if unopposed.

1995 was the year where I just got into the swing of things - 1996 is hoped to be a year of consolidation.

Please, any member, ask for help, volunteer ideas, or just keep me informed. Welcome to Tony Stuart, our new National Chairman.

Mark Holland, Hon. Nat. PR Officer

ARTISTS WANTED

We are seeking cartoonist-type, humorous illustrators to help to make the 'TRF Strategy for Green Lanes' something that people will enjoy reading. Please urgently contact Steve Neville or myself.

There is a draft of the Strategy - please let Steve have your final responses ASAP.

it is an essential document for the TRF - it explains to Highway Authorities, National Parks Authorities, the Countryside Commission and other policy makers how they can help us to protect green lanes.

There will be a small Working Party to finalise the Strategy for release at the LARA Conference in mid-April.

Mark Holland, Hon. Nat. PR Officer

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NOISE MEASURES RUMBLE ON - MINISTERS IGNORE EU PARLIAMENT

The BMF has written to Transport Minister Steven Norris accusing the UK Government of being party to an undemocratic decision in ignoring the European Parliament's compromise position on motorcycle noise reached earlier this year.

In deciding a 'Common Position' on the Motorcycle Multi-Directive, Member Governments (including the UK) have not only agreed a reduction in noise limits from 82dB (A) to 80dB(A), but have imposed a new, much stricter test method, representing a real reduction of 2.75dB(A). FIVE TIMES more than under the intended original and fairer, Commission proposals.

Speaking on the decision, Tim Stevens, the BMF's Government Relations Director said: "Member Governments have deliberately ignored the facts. The problem is a lack of enforcement, not inadequate noiselimits. This is an undemocratic decision to punish motorcyclists for daring to oppose them".

The BMF are now lobbying MPs and MEPs who had supported the motorcyclists case, with the aim of overturning the decision when the Directive returns for a second reading next year.

Ed. - No-one seems to have considered the case for noisy exhaust systems. How many times have you heard a bike before seeing it?

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We must be gluttons for punishment for even contemplating trail riding for five days, when even one good day can be more than enough, and to make it even worse we chose to go to the edge of the Alps proper in the province of Ain between Lyon and Geneva.

It all started 2 years ago when Charles Fleming, a British Ex-Patriot now living in the Dordogne, advertised in TRAIL for groups to be taken out in the Alps with group accommodation included. It took two years for it all to be set up and, with some minor setbacks, six of us from all over the country eventually began our European adventure to experience some of the most breathtaking riding possible (literally).

Four of us set off from the North West on the first Friday afternoon in October, which was wet and blowing a force 8. Friday was a mistake since we could have walked around Birmingham faster, and eventually arrived at Portsmouth with twenty minutes to sailing to find Paul from Guisborough looking very worried. The reason being that he had waited one and a half hours for Neil in Newbury and he had not appeared so he had to leave him. However, Neil arrived at the quay 15 minutes before departure looking equally flustered after chasing along the motorway with his trailer and bike airborne due to severe traffic problems on the largest car park in England - the M25. Ken and myself were in the back of the van shoehorned in between 4 bikes and enough luggage. Because of the traffic problems George had the hammer down and the rear tyres were on the soft side, since they were checked 2 years ago last Christmas and Charlie said they should have been alright. This coupled with the force 9 created a little swing when we overtook, or got in the tramlines in the middle lane. We had planned to take our seasick pills 2 hours before departure, but we were now compelled to take them immediately to avoid boarding the ferry on an empty stomach.

When we docked at Le Havre we found a garage with a "gonfler de pneu", inflated the tyres to several bar for stability and set off into Indian summer weather pockets full of cash for the extortionate tolls on the French motorways. Charlie was made to pay for the tolls, since he was the richest amongst us, but it was down to me to argue with the Peage attendants that the large transit van was only a car and therefore in the lower toll band.

Some attendants would have nothing of it, drawing large vans with their hands, whilst I drew small cars with mine. We had one who smiled at us with a face that said "do you think I came down with the last shower of rain?", but let us off the extra £20 it would have cost for a van.

We eventually arrived at our Gite de Group at tea time to be met by a very genial Bob, the brother of Charles Fleming, who was to be our host for the week. He got full marks immediately since his offer was of a brew - no one refused. The hospitality at Le Puits de Brosset, in the hamlet of Ruffieu, was excellent and

conditions were perfect for a group of trail riders.

We mounted our bikes for the first day and set off in an orderly group on the right hand side of the road and down our first lane which ran straight out of the village. However, the euphoria of it all was short lived when half of us were left at the first junction due to someone not following the "brown cross code". We waited and were soon met by our leader and a few riders who had turned around since the lane was a dead end. This was a familiar move through the whole week, which we got used to - eventually. We found that our leader had not ridden any of the lanes before, this being due to several reasons, one that he lived 350 miles away, another that apparently hardly anyone goes trail riding in the region and it would be very dangerous to ride them on your own. Thus the opportunity to ride them and become familiar with them is very limited. Most of the trails, though not all, are in the forests and the maps available are not up to the standard of our Ordnance Survey, which means there are some inaccuracies and many omissions. The IGN maps are available in scales of 1:100,000, which is rather large for much detail, and 1:25,000 which is the same as our Pathfinder maps, although not as accurate. There is no equivalent to the Landranger 1:50,000 which we use for most of our riding.

We asked about "Rights of Way" and it appears that the French are more liberal about access rights, although there are apparently some "conservationists" who are stirring in parts of the country and asking questions. France is a very big country with sparse population, by our standards, and many of the woods are owned by the local villages, or communes as they are known, who derive some annual income from sales of timber. The villagers also have the option of a patch of forest each year to harvest for firewood at a cost of 100 Francs (£13). This means that the woods have common access for such activities and they are there for the enjoyment of the whole French nation. There are some signs at the end of some forest roads which say that access is forbidden, or that access is for hunters only, then when you go into the wood a few hundred yards to the next junction you come across signs giving directions to mountain bikers and skiers etc. making a nonsense of it all. We were informed that if you ride sensibly and do not cause a nuisance you are welcomed everywhere you go. The French appear to have a liking for bikes and tourists alike, the country folk being very friendly and a little laid back. The forests are full of signs giving routes for mountain bikes, horses, skiers and walkers, all these routes having numbers painted on trees and posts at very close intervals which help you keep to the route and ensure that you are on a through route and not on one of the three million dead ends.

We came to the conclusion, as the week progressed, that it was best to use the map to get to your first lane and point yourself in the correct general direction, with the map firmly in your pocket. The map should just then be used to find where you are when you have emerged from the woods and wish to explore another area. I have never used a compass as much in all my life, finding it very useful when you are in a forest with no landmarks to guide you, and not always

able to see the sun for direction. To keep referring to the map to ascertain your whereabouts is very wasteful of time during the ride and we found that we could go over the routes taken each night with a highlighter pen with reasonable accuracy for future reference.

There was a great variety of terrain varying from gravel, rocks, mud and water but no bottomless Yorkshire bogs, but we did have to negotiate through some deep water filled ruts left by massive forestry vehicles, as in this country. We made the correct decision in fitting knobbly tires and riding in stout boots to protect against the severe bashing by trees, rocks and undergrowth. Fallen trees were also a common hazard, we either had to ride over them, or drag the bikes under. Brash was also a problem and care had to be taken when riding over it since a dab is into nowhere and the undergrowth looms.

The highest point we reached was 1525 metres on the Grand Colombier, which affords an excellent view of Mont Blanc on a good day, and is on the route of one of the Grand Randonnees we rode - the GR9. A very interesting track runs down from this mount to the town of Couloz following a very steep zig zag covering 4 miles for a 1 mile descent and allowing most interesting views of the valley and River Rhone below.

If you are looking for nightlife, all you will get in this area is the sound of crickets, even the bar closes at 6.30pm and we did not even see much happening in there before then. The area is very picturesque with many properties of the alpine mould with verandas and winter firewood neatly stacked outside.

Annecy is one of the nearest large towns and well worth a visit to see the old town and the lake alongside, which caters for water sports and cruises. We also visited the "Gorge du Fier" which is between Annecy and Ruffieu, where the wide river Fier has to pass through a narrow gap in the rocks perhaps 10 or 15ft wide and 100ft high. A marker plate charts the height of the river during the past 100 years and on several occasions it has risen to about 80ft - well above the catwalk upon which visitors walk through the gorge.

I would recommend the area for a trail riding holiday with a difference, which can be mixed with a little sightseeing thrown in. Many thanks to all those who took and made it an enjoyable trip.

Richard Dugdale, Ribble Valley Group

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LETTERS

THE TRF BOOK OF TRAIL RIDING?

I think we need a book about trail riding.

What do you think?

I think we should do it ourselves.

What do you think?

How did you start trail riding? Did you read about it before you tried it?

Week after week I get letters asking about what we do and where we do it.

Most start by saying how difficult it is to find out about the TRF.

I think we need the TRF Book to Trail Riding.

I think we need it in the local library and in the local bookshop and advertised in the motorcycle press so we can tell everyone about who we are and what we do and how they can do it too.

I wrote a book about trail riding a few years ago. Haynes published it. It sold out. Twice. Now it is out of print. It wasn't that good (I can say that because I wrote it) but it was the only book on the topic.

It is time for something new and better.

I want to put it together on your behalf, but I don't want to write it all myself. I want you to help.

What we need is a simple, well illustrated guide to everything there is to know about trail riding. It should cover choosing a bike, basic maintenance, machine control, where and how to ride. It should be packed with hints and tips to benefit up and coming new riders. It should have an attractive layout and lots of pictures.

Do you agree? Would you like to help?

I want to discuss the idea at the Executive Committee meeting in February. Will you be there? If not, write to me with your ideas, or write to Nettlebed and air your views in the TRAIL.

Ian Thompson, Glebe House, St. Columb Minor, Newquay, Cornwall, TR7 3HB.

BE PREPARED: OR WHAT HAVE TRAIL RIDING AND THE GIRL GUIDES GOT IN COMMON?

The trail rider, out in the elements, alone in remote parts, reliant on his trusty steed. No help from the Man That Can when you're marooned on the Monk's Trod in failing light with a broken throttle cable. How DO we manage, indeed, how do we do that?

Clearly different schools of thought exist, from Olly, armed only with the tools to make a roll up, through Curly with his streamline, drilled and lightened tardis bum bag, which despite its feather weight lacks only the facility to perform a re-bore, through Stuart with his telephone to me. My bum bag is the source of constant amusement to my fellow trail riders and a source of considerable encumbrance to

me. It may well add weight to my back wheel and build muscles fit to equip me for Gladiators, but is it *necessary*?

I weighed it the other day. A mere 16 and a half pounds. I feel like some sort of pack mule, struggling along behind the group, equipped for everything short of biological and chemical warfare. I know, I thought, I'll empty it and perform some judicious pruning for the spring. Here's what I found:

Front tube; rear tube; puncture repair kit; two tyre levers; Brittany Ferries shower gel; tow rope; 2 x reels of insulating tape; 1 litre spring water; 8 x rubber bands; 16 x cable ties; 2 x lengths of bailer twine; tin foil; electrical wire; fuses; shortened hacksaw blade; chain splitter; 7 x split links (428 and 510!), 3 x spare lever; 2 x clamps; large adjustable spanner; mole grips; 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19mm spanners, plain and cross head screw drivers; selection of allen keys (metric and imperial); rag; 3 x cable adjusters; selection of nuts and bolts; 16 tooth front sprocket; bag of assorted split pins; plug spanner, 2 x plugs; plug cap (cracked); length of petrol pipe; small torch.

Tied to the rear of the bike is a bag containing: Foot pump; throttle, clutch and both brake cables; complete chain.

And before you start making nasty comments about British bikes, mine is a Honda. And, as for the pruning, well, what could I leave out? For sure, the omission of the chain splitter would result in a broken chain next time out, or the loss of the levers would result in a double sided pile up on some lane. So I shed the imperial allen keys and a couple of split pins for good measure.

Just leaves one question really, what DO other people carry?

Sally A. Madgwick, Cornwall Group

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