

GROUPS

BLACK COUNTRY

Chris Braznell, Tel: 0121 421 3086
1 & 3 Thurs, 9pm, The Mitre, Church Road, Bradmore,
Wolverhampton

BRISTOL

Martin Harding, Tel: 0117 969 6674
2nd Mon, Warmley Community Centre, Deanery
Road, (A420), Kingswood

CAMBRIDGE

Richard Palmer, Tel: 01353 688344
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 Tuesday, Derby Arms Hotel, Witherslack, Nr. Kendal

DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Kevin Marsh, Tel: 01246 237910
2 & 4 Tue., Carbrook Hall, 537 Attercliffe Common, 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 YORKSHIRE

Howard Wadsworth, Tel: 01405 860904
1st Tue, Boot & Shoe, Gowdall, Nr. Snaith

ESSEX

Aelwood Finch, Tel: 01245 329118, Mobile: 0374 471251
2nd Wed, The Swan Public House, Great Eastern, Nr. Dunmow

GLOUCESTER

Wayne Little, Tel: 01452 611735
1st Tue, Painswick Institute, Painswick, Glos.
3rd Tue Worcester Auto Club, Perdiswell Park, Worcester

HERTFORDSHIRE

Colin Adlam, Tel: 01727 875618
1st Wed, Coach & Horses, Newgate St, Nr Cuffly

ISLE OF WIGHT

Mark Gregory, Tel: 01983 867730
Last Thur, The White Lion, Arreton, 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 460793
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

Steve Bertram Tel 0850 863620 11am-6pm Tel & Fax 0191 261 9629
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 Thurs, Duke of Marlborough, 1.5 miles N. of Woodstock

PEAK DISTRICT GROUP

Phil Sadler, Tel: 01332 344495
1st Thursday, 8pm, Travellers Rest, Ashbourne Road, Derby

RIBBLE VALLEY

Tony Broughton, Tel: 01200 423239
2nd Tue, Pendle Hotel, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59)

SHROPSHIRE

Lynton Powell, Tel: 01743 358423
2nd & last Wed, White Horse, Shrewsbury

SOMERSET

Kevin Parfitt, Tel: 01935 72343
Last Thur, The Canal Inn, Wrantage

SOUTHERN

Russ McDermid, Tel: 01703 812371
3rd Wed, The Ship Inn, Owlesbury, Nr. Winchester

SOUTH LONDON & SURREY

Brian Wright 0181 680 5734 Wed-Sat, 01797 363373 Sun-Tue
9pm every Wed, Ewell Sports & Social Club, Banstead Road,
Ewell, Surrey

SOUTH NORTHANTS

Trevor Gardiner, Tel: 01788 815927
2nd Mon, The Live & Let Live Pub, Harpole, nr. Northampton

SOUTH WALES

Stuart Dodwell, Tel: 01446 710851
1st Thur, Welsh Institute of Sport, Cardiff, 8pm

SUFFOLK

Richard May, Tel: 01787 374073
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

TEESSIDE & NORTH YORKS

Leo Crone, Tel: 01325 380117
1st & 3rd Wed, Blacksmiths Arms, Swainby

THAMES VALLEY

Don Hoaglin, Tel: 01474 704530
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

Richard Hawker, Tel: 01527 893874
1st & 3rd Thurs, 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, Halesover



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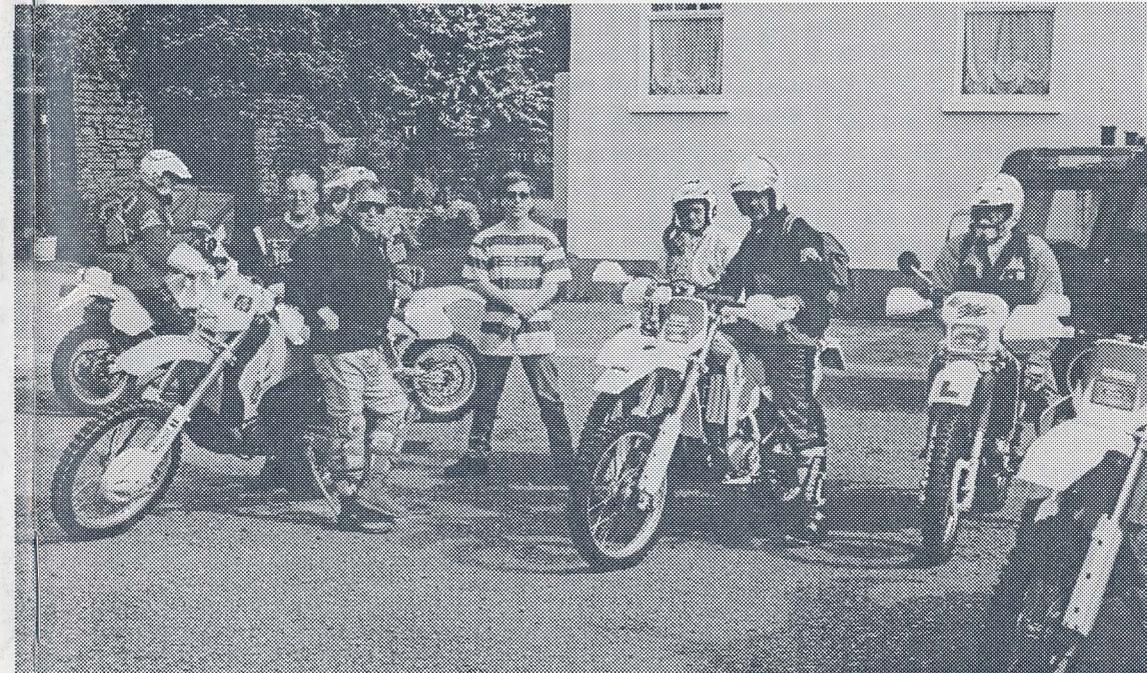
TRAIL

MAY, 1997

No. 225

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

EDITOR: Michael "Nettlebed" Pedley.



Ribble Valley Expedition from Cardiff to Colwyn Bay 1996

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

TRF OFFICERS

- CHAIRMAN** Tony Stuart, Cambrea, Worthy Hill, Trebetherick, Wadebridge, Cornwall, PL27 6SG. Tel/Fax: 01208 862960, Mobile: 0831 467273.
- PUBLIC REL. OFFICER** Mark Holland, Corn Farm, Devauden, Chepstow, Monmouthshire, (Gwent), NP6 6NS. Tel: 01291 650240 (Weekends only).
- MEMBERSHIP SEC.** ... Graham Stratford, 38 Thornton Crescent, Old Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 1LH. Tel: 01737 553599.
- SECRETARY** Dave Clegg, 10 Hardwick Road, Pill, Bristol, North Somerset, BS20 0DG. Tel & Fax: 01275 373652.
- TREASURER** Alan Wilkinson, 29 Christopher Close, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9SA. Tel: 01529 460793.
- EDITOR** Michael Pedley, Nettlebed, Newsholme, Gisburn, Clitheroe, Lancs., BB7 4JF. Tel & Fax: 01200 445657.
- RoW OFFICER** Steve Neville, 40 The Sandpipers, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 5QB. Tel: 01474 332785.
- BMF LIAISON OFFICER** Derrick Collins, 11 Grangewood Road, Wollaton, Nottingham, Notts. NG8 2SJ. Tel: 0115 9282806.
- KEEPER OF STATIONERY** Aelwood Finch, 8 Hallowell Down, South Woodham, Ferrers, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 5FS. Tel: 01245 329118, Mobile: 0374 471251.
- DISPLAY EQUIPMENT CO-ORDINATOR** Jeff Ward Ltd., Gretton Road, Weldon, Northamptonshire, NN17 3HY. Tel: 01536 267036 or Fax: 01536 408787.
- TRF MERCHANDISER** Rob Sawyer, 22 Gloucester Close, Weedon, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN7 4PA. Tel: 01327 341255.

TRF, P.O. Box 196, Derby DE1 9EY.

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

EDITOR

So how did you vote? OK, I don't really want to know - I personally found it a rather difficult decision and I suppose you did too - if you took your hobby into account as well as the rest of your life!

TRAIL has always tried to stay away from serious politics which is why we decided against any comment in the pre-election issue but perhaps we may now indulge ourselves a little.

Those of you who read MCN every week as I still do would have been amused at their attempt to set out the respective Party stance with regard to motorcycling. Both parties wanted to capture the 'biker' vote - or at least not to reject it- and made feeble pro-bike claims like "we feel that motorcycles should definitely be part of any integrated transport policy". Which put another way could easily be interpreted as "the roads would be a lot safer without hoards of lunatic bikers who make us look particularly stupid when they roar past lines of stationary traffic" - or perhaps I'm just an old cynic...

The bit that really worries me however is the 'relationship' between the Ramblers and New Labour. With the formation of the Countryside Movement as a total 'right-wing' organisation, plus the Country Landowners Association and the Associations representing 'Country' sports (i.e. killing things) it is clear that Labour must align with the RA and may well rely on their equally biased viewpoint in making new RoW and access policy

As I type this editorial, only five days after the election, there is already a piece on the news about the RA pushing the Government to include an 'access bill' in the Queen's Speech! Whatever happened to sensible consultation and debate? Will we still have our legal right of access to the National Parks by the next general Election? Did you definitely put your cross in the right place?

NETTLEBED

SPAIN

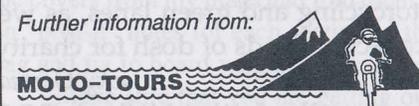
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Active member of Herts. TRF

LANDS END TO JOHN O' GROATS

My long-awaited plan to do a sponsored off-tarmac trail ride from Lands' End to John O' Groats is finally coming to fruition between 28th July and 12th August this year.

Two others of that rare breed "women who ride off tarmac" are joining in, doing part of the route each, and the "Container Company", specialist importers of trail bikes, have kindly agreed to lend bikes. Everyone I've contacted so far (mainly TRF groups) has been really helpful in getting the route sorted, which will be somewhat wiggly to avoid surfaced roads as much as possible.

We'll probably be heading over Exmoor, through Bath area, up the Welsh border, from North Wales across to the Peak District, through the Eastern part of the Yorkshire Dales, up towards Northumberland and on to Edinburgh. Scottish rights of way law presents a challenge but hopefully local riders will demistify it sufficiently to plan the rest.

If anyone would like to meet up en route/ride with us for a while/help with route planning/provide cups of tea, bed or floor space/suggest good camping spots or refreshment points/SPONSOR US, or have any further information that might assist us (e.g. anyone know a friendly, generous van hire company or a dealer who might provide tyres, clothing etc?) please contact me on 01453 751560.

I hope the trip will be fun, relatively painless and a good PR exercise, encouraging women's increased involvement and raising the profile of motorcycling and green lanes, as well as collecting loads of dosh for charity.

Jacky German
(Glos & West Midlands T.R.F.)

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am now nearly recovered from my first trail bike enduro. Entered the Sportsmans Class, which is apparently for beginners or those that have not won any awards previously. Had one or two unscheduled get offs, resulting in torn ligaments in one knee. Received the expected amount of sympathy from her indoors, saying "I think you are stupid and much too old for that sort of thing!" Seeing as I was between 30 and 40 years older than most of the other competitors, maybe she's got a point! Nevertheless I managed to come 14th out of 24 and another member of our Group, Steve Welch, won the class, well done Steve!

Six members of our Group recently very much enjoyed a long weekend in the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District. Super - and demanding - trail riding with an excellent local guide each day. Many thanks to Edwin Duckett, Robin Todd and Will Fisher. Again illustrates benefits of belonging to a countrywide club.

By the time you read this the Coast-to-Coast run will have taken place and I hope to be able to do a report for the June TRAIL on my experiences.

Gwyn Thomas is quite right. (April TRAIL). We must not allow ourselves to be intimidated or even brain washed out of using routes that have vehicular rights. We have exactly the same problems here in Cornwall and where necessary we are prepared to put our case most strongly to the Council. If you think that the loss, or downgrading of a route will affect other users, your case could well be assisted by arranging a meeting of all user groups, in order that a joint approach may be made to the Council. I know that I go on a bit about this, but I firmly believe that a united front can often achieve better results. We have what we call the Cornwall Rights of Way Action Group. All user groups attend our meetings, which means that any joint decision coming from one of those meetings is the opinion of the general public wanting access to the countryside. It works for us - it could work for you.

In the latest edition of TrailBike Magazine there is a description of a removable map board for trail bikes. This costs about £35 and as well as holding a folded map covers your speedo and instruments! My simple solution, which I have used successfully for several years, is to cut a piece of thin plywood to 9" x 12", round the bottom corners to reduce the chance of injury to any of your personal instruments in the event of an over the bars departure and fasten to the handlebar cross-brace with inner tube rubbers. I then remove the covers from my maps and fold them into 12 to match the board. For use I write the route on "post-it" notes for each section of the map, stick them on and place the map in a poly bag and fix to board with 2 more rubbers. It works and is dead cheap and easy.

Make sure that you are getting out there plenty. You are only young once, so make the most of it - or in the words of the song, "enjoy yourself while you're still in the pink, enjoy yourself it's later than you think".

P.S. A close mate of mine - Jeff Hewitt - is languishing in hospital at the time of writing, following a nasty accident whilst out trail riding. Get better soon Jeff!

Tony Stuart

ROW NEWS

"Use only vehicular rights of way.

If in doubt ask the County Council or the TRF".

So says the first rule of the TRF Code of Conduct. This is pretty straight forward when riding byways open to all traffic (BOATs) and unclassified roads (UCRs). However, when we ride bridleways or footpaths that are incorrectly defined we must be pretty certain that those higher rights actually exist. Documentary evidence is needed. Enclosure awards, first edition OS, Tithes, Finance Act 1910, railways plans are necessary. User evidence completes the story but can only work if it has been built upon good documentary evidence. To a lesser extent, this advice is also valid for RuPPs which eventually need to be reclassified. We may believe that most should be BOATs. This leads me to:

STAFFORDSHIRE

I have been having some interesting correspondence with Staffs CC re. Bridleway 22, Marchington.

Local users have been stopped on the route which is shown as a bridleway on the definitive map. I have written to the farmer explaining the situation. However it was previously a road used as a public path (RuPP) which in most cases carry vehicular rights. As we all know the depiction of a bridleway on the definitive map is only indicative of its minimum right (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, section 56(1)e. Nevertheless I advise anyone who rides this lane and other green lanes with the wrong status, to have knowledge of what historic rights exist.

As I understand, under the later Countryside Act 1968 a review was carried out using the suitability test which was rejected under the more recent Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, since it was plainly unworkable. Councils were directed to reject these reviews but Staffordshire CC were amongst the few that did not. Am I right?

We should consider a Schedule 14 application under the WCA 1981 Act for a definitive map modification order, since the CC are threatening reporting registration numbers to the Police. On which subject, the Staff's police have started *Operation Trover* (possibly a mis-spelling of the French word *se trouver*, to find or discover?) This was a bit worrying at first when a member wrote thinking that it was aimed at legal trail riding. I spoke to the Police in Staffs who assure me that it is NOT targeted at the TRF. The voice message could be better worded though. Rather it is aimed at the £%&*\$ that nick bikes and thrash them around canal towpaths and school playing fields. The Police have my support. Let's help them out (01785) 235050.

SURREY

We have lost the PI on the Shere BOAT 513 to bridleway. The Inspector rubbished our user evidence partially due to the dedication of the Common in the late 1920s using a provision of the Law of Property Act 1925. This precluded the possibility of establishing vehicular rights after this date. The pre-1925 evidence was weak and for reasons explained last month the county council failed to assert and protect our rights. The Bray Settled Estate have more money than the TRF for research and to conveniently forget anything that could strengthen our case, so we lost out. Funny though it's still an unclassified road on the list of streets. We have 42 days to appeal from the date of the confirmation of the order.

I have also written to the PI about the quality of decision making. Anyone want to do an MSc/MA/PhD thesis on "Quality of decision making on public rights of way based on an assessment of historic and current user evidence?"

SUSSEX

A review of RuPPs is continuing into a second *tranche* (derived from the French word meaning portion and used by the council to show that they are more intellectual than the public). Most of the RuPPs should go to BOAT but expect the usual objections. Contact the Sussex group for further details. East Sussex seem to be keeping quiet about their RuPPs.

TRAIL RIDERS GUIDE VIDEO

I have a copy of this and share some of the reservations stated by Bill Kershaw last month. I think the main fault is the failure at the beginning in not making a distinction between competition on trail bikes/enduros/motorcross (MX)/observation trials and **non-competitive** trail riding on green lanes. I don't think that body armour is a particular problem if it is worn discreetly. I have a chest/back protector plus knee and elbow pads that can be worn under a jacket or even MX shirt. They have protected me in the past and I would advise trail riders to wear this sort of protection. I personally have had few problems wearing MX boots with a smooth(ish) sole. They're much better than trials wellies for protection.

PEDAL CYCLE USER EVIDENCE

If you have used a RuPP, bridleway or even footpath (shock horror) by cycle it could provide useful user evidence at reclassification or DMMO. The reason is that a bicycle (a two-wheeled one) is a carriage, but it is not such a serious crime to use an un-powered carriage where you should not be than it is a powered one. It is an interesting concept to consider. The catch is that they are permitted under the Countryside Act 1968 s30 on bridleways which weakens the

case BUT if your cycle is a trike then it is not a bicycle and therefore does not come under the permission of that Act. Therefore the user is a carriage user, NOT a bicycle user. Think about it. Would the Planning Inspectorate cope with that one? (jeeze, this is getting really sad!)

Steve Neville, RoW Officer

WEST SOMERSET GROUP

Exmoor National Park Independence

This April a new era was ushered into our Exmoor National Park with the last of the country's 11 National Parks becoming independent and free standing within local Government.

Our National Parks were created soon after the Second World War by an Act of Parliament in 1949. Prior to this date there was growing pressure for some areas of special landscape to be under the protection of Government legislation to ensure that the ever rising recreational needs were not under threat to the conservation of the area. Over the last century, we in Britain have witnessed urbanisation on a great scale with an increase of public interest with the need to escape into the quiet countryside for all sorts of exercise - walking, horse riding, bird watching, hunting, cycling, fishing, courting, picnicking and trail riding! We all are aware that since those far off days quality of life has greatly improved among the British people what with more leisure time and money in their pockets which has increased the demands for those basic recreational needs.

When Exmoor first became a designated National Park back in 1954 there were three committees formed to manage it! One representing Somerset, another for Devon together with a joint committee with no paid staff employees. 1974 saw a re-organisation of local Government and the Exmoor National Park Authority became part of the Somerset County Council with a special department being formed with its own committee complete with staff based at Exmoor House in Dulverton.

1991 saw changes within the organisation of the National Parks when it was recommended in the Edward's Report that the Parks be "Fit for the Future". On April 1st 1997, Exmoor became a free standing separate organisation with the newly formed Exmoor National Park (ENP) Committee with 26 members representing Devon (4), Somerset (8), West Somerset County Council (1), North Devon (1), District Councils and Parish Councils (5) and (7) members nominated by the Secretary of State selected because they have a special expertise and understanding of Exmoor. *So we have been told.*

All local users of the ENP rights of way network are aware that little or no change has taken place with regard to the Public Rights of Way Paths other than the responsibility that has been delegated from both counties to the ENP

Authority. Walkers and horseriders are aware that ENP Authority now has the powers to make its own Traffic Regulations Orders if it is thought necessary. A special leaflet is available from ENP Visitor Centres under the heading "Exmoor Going Independent" for those who want further information on the subject.

Should you need to contact an ENP Ranger responsible for any of the four designated areas, they are: Alison Kent, 0378 966660, responsible for the Eastern Section of the Park; Jim Webber, 0836 780903, responsible for the Northern Section of the Park; Mike Leach, 0836 686865, responsible for the Centre Section of the Park; Tim Braund, 0836 780904, responsible for the Western Section of the Park; Exmoor National Park Authority, 0836 780904.

Should you not be successful in locating any of the above Rangers on their mobile telephones your telephone number will have been recorded and ENP will contact you in due course.

Julian Bruford

A SUCCESS STORY

Bucks County Council Withdrawal of Proposed Lane Closures

I would like to thank everyone who supported me by writing, telephoning, etc. with the aim of objecting to the proposed closures of UCRs by Bucks C.C.

There were times when I felt like giving up in despair, but by support kept battling away. This meant at times spending about 2 hours on the telephone at least 3 evenings a week for about a couple of months to coordinate all the objectors. These included The South Midland Centre ACU, BHS, individual motorcycle clubs as well as the TRF Groups and members.

To all those people who did write, try to convince your fellow members that by a little effort of a letter some success can be attained and the high degree of satisfaction makes the effort all worthwhile, thus furthering our aims.

Thank you again everyone for such a good effort resulting in a happy ending.

Chris Hurworth, Bucks RoW

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ANOTHER DAY

I have a poem which I have made into a song, but you will have to do without the music!

When I think of all the folk I've met
and the places that I've seen
The faces that have passed me by
And fields of red and green
Of clouds that look like castles
But are really made of steam
Whisky on a cold day, and in summer
Strawberries and cream.

I'll take you on a trail ride
If you've got six hours to spare
To show you where the old roads are
and how to ride with care
We'll stop and taste the local food
Maybe a glass of beer
We're sure to see the wild life
Pheasant, hawk or deer

The world is not a bad place
If you really spend some time
To look upon the old things
That history's left behind

Like trees, and walls, and cobblestones
And bridges old and grey
Ancient paths grown over
Let's hope they're here to stay

We'll start at ten from Tiverton
And head East for a while
A right turn at the golf club
Into Manley Lane for a mile
Across the canal, up the hill
And enter Thurlscombe Lane
It's a gravel track, grass and rocks
Then tarmac once again

There's Trinity and Greenslynch
The chapel on the hill
There's Little Burn and Cotton Farm
Where last week I had a spill.
I'll take you to Way Village
And across the River Dart
We'll lift off at Grouber Bridge
Brake hard, the comer's sharp

From Pennymoor to the Rectory
And on to Partridge Farm
Bunkersland to Calverleigh
Molland Copse and Garscombe
Coleford Bottom's great
Tricky's Farm and Hollywell
Watch out for the gate.

Dodiscombe to Greenway
Bampton Down is flat
Pipshayne Farm to Ford Mill
An interesting track.
We've covered over fifty miles
and now we're headed South
So home we go to clean our gear
I need to feed my mouth

I'll you up on Exmoor
When we meet again
To Bury Hill and Barlinch Woods
and maybe Kersham Lane
There's Luckwell Bridge and Stone Cross
Tarpot and Two Moors Way
Such a lot of lanes to see
and ride another day.

M. Troake, West Somerset

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THE TRAIL RIDERS GUIDE VIDEO - GO TRAIL RIDING

Thank you for publishing (April '97) my critical comments about the Event One video. It resulted in news that a revised version is about to become available. My information is that many of the points put to me at the Countryside Forum in Cardiff had already been recognised by the producers as needing revision and that note has been taken of the other items of concern. This is good news and from what I am told, Mark 2 is likely to be a much more acceptable package suitable for showing at formal gatherings of countryside users of all types, as well as on informal occasions for the benefit of prospective new members.

As Paul Blezard, one of the joint presenters, has pointed out to me, we trail riders are such a varied bunch that no one could produce a video about our pastime guaranteed to please everyone. I agree and, without seeing it, I am happy to suggest Groups buy a copy of the new version knowing that they can express their own opinions to viewers if they find any of the guidance it now offers, inappropriate or unhelpful.

The address is still Event One Productions, 22, Soho Square, London, W1V 5FJ and it is assumed Mark 2 when available will be at the unchanged price of £12.49.

Bill Kershaw (South Wales Group Member)

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A Note from MAG

I was sorry to read that Tony Steel had his bike stolen from a hospital car park. TRF members should all be aware that MAG offers a £500 reward for information leading to the conviction of any person stealing a bike from a MAG member. The scheme is simple - if you are a MAG member and your bike is stolen then you can produce a reward poster and leaflet and distribute it in your locality. If someone comes up with the right information you don't have to worry about paying the reward - MAG will pay it. You get your bike back and the thief goes to jail - hopefully!

MAG also offers a reward of up to £5000 for information leading to convictions where professional bike theft gangs are concerned. We have just paid out £2500 to an individual who secured the evidence which enabled such a gang to be caught and jailed. The Norwich Union have joined forces with us on this and jointly underwrite the scheme with us.

Given that MAG membership only costs £15 per individual, £21.50 joint, it's a small price to pay to beat bike thieves. Isn't it?

Neil F. Liversidge, MAG National Chairman

ACU - FACILITATING NOT GOVERNING

Thank you for the rather glowing comments you made in your editorial in the March issue of TRAIL. I didn't know anyone cared so much, but I really appreciate it. It sounds like there are some great expectations of me. Daunting, I would say.

The perceptions you so ably portrayed in the opening paragraphs of your piece illustrate rather well what must be central to my early work at the ACU. For whatever are the facts about the ACU and the work which it does, they mean nothing if the perceptions are something different.

Pressures are always on from many sources to increase the regulation of motor sport and recreation. The ACU strives as much to limit regulation as we do to administer it where necessary. Riders who complain about the level of regulation applied to the sport by the ACU should consider how much regulation there could be if the Union, and similar federations in other countries, had never existed at all. Regulation has protected the future of the activity, just as much as some riders may think it has stifled it. Regulation is just two sides of one coin.

Even the laid back TRF proclaims to be the "governing" body of Trail Riding. Which presumes, I suppose, that TRF members need some governing also. In an ideal world they shouldn't of course. Trail Riding should be an activity free of all governance and regulation. But we all know that this isn't possible in today's world. Trail riding can only be protected when we (the TRF) can show that it is being managed in some way. It's all to do with rights and responsibilities isn't it. Our rights are preserved only through being able to illustrate that there is a degree of control over the activity.

Geoff Wilson, TRF member, Chief Executive, ACU

THE COACHING AGE

From Longmans Secondary Histories Britain Since 1700

by R J Cootes

Between 1790 and 1830 the network of turnpike roads spread all over the kingdom. In that time Parliament passed 2450 Turnpike Acts, compared with 1600 in the previous forty years. There were parallel improvements in road vehicles. Wagons and carts gradually replaced packhorses for the carriage of goods; in the towns, sedan chairs gave way to private horse-drawn carriages and hired cabs, and there were great advances in stage coach travel. Coaches in the mid eighteenth century were heavily built and without proper springs, which made them slow and uncomfortable. But by the turn of the century they had improved to such an extent that it was faster to send mail by coach than by postboys on horseback.

The growth of regular postal service was one of the chief results of better transport in this period. There was no real national system before 1720, when Ralph Allen of Bath was granted a monopoly of all postal deliveries outside London. Although his postboys were easy prey for highwaymen, he managed to run a regular service three times a week between all the main towns. By the 1780's, single coaches on the new roads could out-speed the horse post. As a result John Palmer, also from Bath, was given a Post Office contract to carry the mails between London and Bristol by coach, beginning in 1784. Palmer's coaches did the journey in sixteen hours and were such a success that within a few years fast mail coaches served London and all the main towns. They carried passengers as well as the mail, and each coach had a guard armed with a blunderbuss as a protection against highwaymen. Like the postboys before them, mail coaches were exempt from turnpike tolls. The guard sounded his post horn on approaching the toll gates to avoid unnecessary delay. This privilege helped mail coaches gain a reputation for speed and punctuality.

Mail coaches also delivered newspapers. Most large towns had their own daily papers by this time, and London had several. They were a fairly recent development, for, although periodicals appeared well before 1700, the first daily newspaper - *The Daily Courant* - began in 1702. It was printed on one side of a sheet of paper measuring eight inches by fourteen. During the course of the century, papers of several pages began to appear. More than half of their news space was normally devoted to parliamentary debates, and the remainder to articles, gossip, letters and columns of small advertisements. Since the great majority of the population could not read, 2000 copies was considered a good

daily sale for a leading London newspaper, even in the Coaching Age.

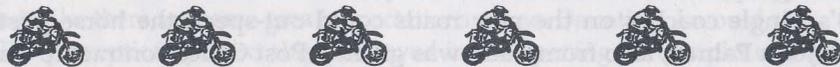
The mail-coaches were built for speed, with lighter more streamlined bodies, steel springs and thinner wheels. These advances in design were taken up by private coach companies, which competed with each other to provide the fastest, most comfortable services. By the 1820's and 1830's, a good stage coach, changing horses frequently at coaching inns, could average up to ten miles an hour on a long run. The Independent 'Tally-Ho' averaged fourteen miles an hour from London to Birmingham. By the 1830's, when competition from railways became a serious threat, improved roads, thoroughbred horses and better designed coaches had together brought about a remarkable reduction in travelling times in comparison with the mid eighteenth century.

Average travel times under favourable conditions

| | 1750's | 1830 approx |
|--------------------|---------|------------------|
| London - Newcastle | 6 days | Just over 1 day |
| London - Edinburgh | 10 days | 2 days |
| London - Brighton | 1 day | 5 and half hours |

Sent in by Julian Bruford, West Somerset Group

Ed. - With all the archaeologists working/diggings on our motorways we should soon be back to the journey times of the 1750's - that's progress.



• BOOK REVIEW •

DESERT TRAVELS

Motorcycle Journeys in The Sahara & West Africa by Chris Scott

£6.99

ISBN 1874472 505 - 256pp, 1 map, 21 mapettes

In Desert Travels the author of the practical manual "Desert Biking" as well as various "Rough Guide" travel titles and the forthcoming "Adventure Motorbiking Handbook" looks back over his life long fascination with motorbiking in the Sahara and West Africa. He recalls his early solo adventures and the trials of "Sahara Motorcycle Tours", an ill-fated enterprise which scraped home with just one rider. Delving into Saharan lore and selected histories, he ruminates on the enigmatic lure of the dunes, the tensions of group travel and the charisma of sub-Saharan Africa.

**BMW R80G/S
- A SECOND OPINION**

I have owned an "A" registration R80G/S between 3,300 and 96,000 miles (sold) and a "G" registration G/S (Paralever) between 27,000 and 53,000 (so far) miles.

I have used both these occasionally for trail riding and for helping at horse events.

The initial appeal was that they are tough and also easy and cheap to run. They run on trail tyres (cheaper than tyres for a sports bike), can be serviced in an afternoon (using barely more than the tool kit) and have few parts to corrode (once an excellent Keihan stainless exhaust is fitted).

To handle a G/S on untarred roads you first have to get used to riding on tarmac. Then you will need to be fairly tall and strong. However, the G/S is extremely tractable and has a low centre of gravity. The "boxer" cylinder layout is rarely a problem - it actually protects the handlebars and indicators when it falls over and makes it easier to pick up.

The G/S is not suited to sustained high speeds with its lowish gearing and upright riding position - although a windscreen helps greatly. I have ridden up to Derbyshire then enjoyed a trail ride and done the same to the Lake District. This was a ride organised by Geoff Wilson for the BMW Club and I joined the TRF soon after.

The broad spread of torque means it will pull in top gear from about 25mph - revving the engine is pointless, it just romps along, up-changes can be made without the clutch, it never vibrates but "shakes" when pulling hard and can be steered on the throttle with it's lusty engine and phenomenal shut down.

Yes, it is a good "road" bike. It is also a good all-rounder and suited to all but the most challenging of green lanes. I took Iona King from Entec/DoE on site visits to green lanes in the pouring rain - an interesting day. Obviously a G/S will not suit everyone's needs though.

The Salesman who sold me the first G/S said that he had had a lot of fun on his. I certainly have on mine.

Mark Holland, Gloucester Group

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PARALLEL IMPORT RESTRICTIONS RAISE FEARS

MAG (Motorcycle Action Group) Belgium is alerting rider organisations to potential problems caused through a ban on parallel or "grey" imports.

A court case brought by a leading Japanese motorcycle distributor against a Belgian independent parallel importer on 10th April may set a precedent leading to a ban on independent European Union imports of motorcycles from countries outside the EU.

BETRAYAL OF EUROPEAN IDEAL IN CONCILIATION CARVE-UP

Motorcyclists' historic victories of the 1995 noise campaign are slipping away from them at the final European hurdle. In conciliation proceedings, the Dutch Presidency, EU Governments and the European Parliament unashamedly and openly treat the May 1995 and June 1996 votes as no longer binding upon them. The official conciliation meeting is expected on 4th February in Brussels.

The controversy hinges around a proposal to reduce motorcycle noise from 82dB (A) to 80dB(A), which was thrown out by a massive 93% of MEPs last Summer. Motorcyclists say that the original Commission proposal is now being thrown back in their faces, because 82dB(A) has suddenly once again become "not negotiable".

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MANY MANY HAPPY RETURNS

Seventy years young and still riding! Who? Dick Sulton. Many of you out there will have met Dick over the years. Lots will have been fortunate enough to have ridden out with him. Dick, one of those responsible for launching the TRF, will be the big Seven O on June 13th. He still takes visitors out trail riding in his adopted Welsh countryside. He still rides to Scotland for the Scottish six day events and Italy for the Stella Alpina and thinks nothing of riding 3-400 miles to watch a pre-65 event. I am sure many members of the TRF would like to join in wishing Dick many happy returns and many more years in the saddle. If you would like to send him a card, his address is Pen Rochel Farm, Dolan, Nr. Poybont, Llandrindod Wells, Radnorshire, Wales.

Mark Phillips, East Mids TRF

FOR PUBLICATION WITH THANKS

Reference the excellent guide to "Organising and Participating in a Trail Ride" (March TRAIL, page 12). I only add the points between nos. 28 and 29, "Minimise the spreading of loose material carried onto tarmac roads by riding for a short distance near to the kerb or verge". No. 23 - would the following instead suffice? (acknowledge BMW Club): "Keep an eye on the person behind. If you lose sight of them, slow down or stop before the next turn-off point and wait for them to catch up".

This guide may be published in future as a TRF leaflet. Your comments welcome.

Mark Holland, Gloucester Group

IS GROUP INSURANCE A POSSIBILITY?

It's insurance renewal time for my trail bike, and I was gobsmacked to get a £300 TPFT quote for my CRM250 (and me reaching the big three-oh this year). This is with 5 years no-claims on a bike I completed 3000 miles on last year.

Surely as trail riders we are a minimal risk for third party claims, if not theft? There are not many bus queues to plough into up on Roych Clough, and even if there were, surely the chance of it happening is reduced if riding is limited to (not enough) Sundays out when time allows?

Is there nothing we could do to negotiate a club insurance scheme in view of our collective "insurability"? Or is this not a problem for the millionaires that form the majority of TRF membership? Do we not have in our number anyone connected to the Insurance business who could maybe get the ball rolling? After all, even MAG have an insurance scheme. Incidentally, does legal expenses cover on a bike policy include the costs of defending a RoW court action? It must, if we

are using vehicles on routes with vehicular rights. If this is the case maybe the TRF could reallocate the money earmarked for defending members in court to other areas of our involvement. If legal cover does not help with these sort of court costs, maybe the TRF insurance scheme should include it. This would provide a tangible benefit of membership - this must be useful in our recruitment campaigns.

Anthony Bramah, Cheshire

GRADING PROPOSAL

Members of the mountain climbing fraternity have evolved a system of grading their climbs according to the level of skill required to overcome them, difficult, very difficult, severe, very severe etc. I have often wondered if something similar could be done with our trails. It would be very interesting to know before one set out on a ride the level of difficulty likely to be experienced and also to be able to judge how one was progressing personally in one's ability.

I realise that there are certain problems inherent in any system of gradation of this sort, for example I know of trails that are almost unridable after a long winter of rain and frost which in summer conditions are almost too easy. Similarly some hard baked Summer ruts become relatively easy when softened by rain. But given these problems it should not be impossible to derive a scale that would at least indicate the degree of difficulty to be expected under defined conditions. Perhaps members with climbing experience would like to comment on this proposal.

Bob Combley, Oxford

TRANSHUMANCE - SPANISH TRAILS

This Christmas I received a rather unusual present from Maria a Spanish friend - no, not an inflatable Carl Fogarty - but a sheep. Now I've got your attention let me explain.

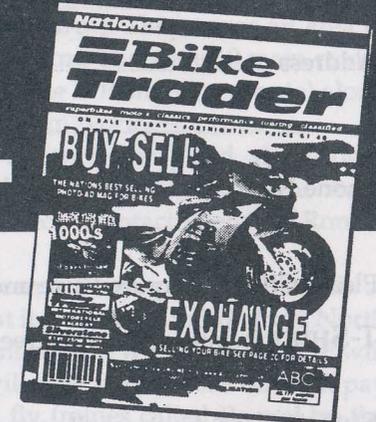
As a part of the Spanish Government's scheme to conserve rural traditions and culture thousands, yes thousands of kilometres of drovers' trails are being preserved and donations in the form of sponsoring a sheep, cow (or shepherd) are being encouraged. In return the Sponsor receives an official certificate making him or her a "Pastor/Pastora de Honor" (a honorary shepherd) and, I assume, giving said shepherd the right to travel the drovers' routes (although in law this right already exists for everyone). I have had my certificate put on a T-shirt which ought to confuse sheep farmers in the Yorkshire Dales.

The "transhumance" in the title refers to one of the most ancient traditions in Europe and is the practice of conducting seasonal cattle drives of hundreds of kilometres in order to take advantage of the available food and water supplies on lowland plains in Winter and mountain pastures in Summer. At its height this thousand year old practice involved four million head of sheep, goats, cows and

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horses and was instrumental in unifying the Spanish language and culture as well as developing the economy through a monopoly of the merino wool trade.

The routes are known as "canadas reales" and are classified according to width: canales (75.2m); cordeles (37.5m); veredas (29.9m). They cover an area of 4000 square metres and have a total length of 124000km! There are 10 main routes from North to South (see map) and include the Ruta de la Plata (silver route) along which silver from the New World reached Seville from Northern ports.

On holiday in central Spain last October I drove along and alongside a hundred km of the Real Segoviana into the Gredos mountains. Part of the route included what must be the longest and most spectacular intact stretch of Roman Road in Europe.

Since then I have been doing a lot of research, hampered by the lack of suitable maps and a lack of awareness in Spain but it is possible to ride from North to South on trails - and back again using a different route. I wonder if the TRF will sponsor me on a fact finding trip and my boss will give me 6 weeks off with pay in Spring? Then again maybe merino sheep will fly (mines called Raquel by the way).

Is there anyone in the TRF with more information?

Rodger Davies, Lancashire TRF



LAST OF THE SUMMER WINE 2

Wrinklies In Brecon

It seemed a bit foolhardy to be booking accommodation for a Brecon Run during the freezing weather of January '97. However a provisional booking for mid March was made with the prospect of a ride over the Gap Road the major incentive.

When the Southern Group runs program was published at the end of January the inclusion of a Brecon Run was subject to comments like; have you been there during March before? It snowed when I went to the world trials round a few years ago in March. Undaunted seven of the Southern Group duly signed up and bookings were confirmed with Beacons Guest House.

The early March weather did little to inspire confidence but as departure day of Wednesday 19th March drew near there was a dramatic improvement, the wind dropped and the grey skies cleared.

The group that assembled at the Beacons was again made up of more senior members but our average age was diluted a little below the 60 mark by George Watkins who had absconded from work to join us.

Thursday dawned bright and clear so the decision was made to use the route planned to take us over the Gap Road while the visibility was good. At 0930 we were off, leaving Brecon southwards up St. Davids and on to the Gap Road. The climb up was excellent and the view from the top at 598m superb. Then on to the sting in the tail, the stream and the climb out up the muddy gully, which for some required manual assistance. I had last ridden the Gap in 1976 and it was pleasing to note that apart from the stream and gully there was little erosion damage, unlike the ridge walking path at the Gap which is now paved to prevent further damage.

On next to the lane over to Talybont and a stop at the John Ebbrel memorial seat, to admire the view and recount memories of John on the BMF organised Brecon Runs of the early 1970s. To the south of Talybont is a RuPP we had not previously ridden which could be seen from the JE seat and appeared worth a visit. This did involve a fair mileage of tarmac but the climb up was worth the effort.

As the visibility was still good it was decided to make our way northwards and ride over Grwyne Fawr and actually admire the view, not seen on previous visits due to low cloud and rain. To achieve this we rode south to north (the easy way), the view from the top at 690M was again superb.

Our route then took us back to Talybont to ride different lanes south of the reservoir, and finally return to Brecon back over the Gap Road as the sun was setting to the west. Throughout the day we had been ably led by John Sapsard.

Friday dawned misty but by the time breakfast was completed the sun was burning through. The route planned for the day by Mike May was to ride Sarn Helen, along which progress was interrupted by stops to admire the views in ideal weather, photo session at the ford (water level low), and the need to feed and

water the inner person (we had one lady in our group). One diversion off Sarn Helen just past the fire tower to take in the interesting drop down into the river valley, over the bridge and up the sharp zig zag climb. It was here that Pete Smith on his now ancient KLR250 put us all to shame with a feet up climb, where most were scrabbling like demented centipedes.

From the southern end of Sarn Helen a few miles of tarmac took us NW to Brynamman. Here a very interesting track goes northward over a grassed boulder strewn hill. The start of the track is not too evident but soon becomes clear with the line clearly marked with boulders on either side but a few boggy parts to catch the unwary.

It was now late afternoon and time to turn back eastward taking in tarmac and unsurfaced lanes, and the Roman road to Treacastle, followed by the final run to Brecon along a quiet A40. It had been hoped to explore some of the lanes north of the A40 to take us back to Brecon but time defeated us, perhaps the subject for another wrinkly run.

Mike May, Southern Group

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now £20; Scott goggles, blue/yellow, fitted with "fog thing", £10; AXO MX pants, size 32, blue/white, £30; Belstaff waterproof nylon jacket, red/grey, size 44", £60. Tel: 01740 631170 after 6pm.

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