

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 Tony Bramah, Tel: 0161 366 6813
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

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ISLE OF WIGHT Mark Gregory, Tel: 01983 867730
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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

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
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SOMERSET Kevin Parfitt, Tel: 01935 72343
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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
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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

WORCESTERSHIRE David Gunster, Tel: 01905 616400
3rd Tuesday, Worcester Auto Club, Perdiswell Park, Worcs.

WYVERN Steve Pighills, Tel: 01902 672479
Every Thur, 10pm, Potter's Rose & Crown, Colley Lane,
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TRAIL

JULY, 1997

No. 227

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

EDITOR: Michael "Nettlebed" Pedley.



Garburn Pass, looking towards Kentmere.

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

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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

I am pleased to say that your club, the TRF, now has more members than at this time last year, is financially stable and has some thousands of pounds in a separate "Fighting Fund" account as well as pledges for much more from groups and individuals should it be needed. This is in answer to some recent negative comment which has come to my notice.

Is the TRF good value for money? I think we get it for nothing. After all, it costs less than the annual subscription for a well known trail magazine and for that we get a monthly Bulletin which is exclusively for the use of our members. If you don't like the content or would like to see it changed, then the answer is in your hands. You also get "Fellowship", that intangible thing where you can rely on help from fellow trail riders on and off the trail (although it has been suggested that this only exists in the South West - although this is not so in my experience as I have ridden in many parts of the country and have been invited to ride in others which I haven't yet got round to), legal back-up and a whole lot more.

These are some of the things which will be discussed at the next Executive Meeting on the 6th September, so don't leave it to someone else - if you feel strongly about any of these points or there are any more you'd like to make, get there yourself. If you can't make it PUT IT IN WRITING, after all, we get the organisation we deserve don't we. We look forward to hearing your comments - so put pen to paper.

NETTLEBED

We need your photographs. If you have any you would like to see on the front cover, please send with a S.A.E. to me and it will be returned whether used or not.

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*From The
Membership
Secretary*

Just a short note to say thanks to the South Northants Group for a fine display at the BMF Show in May. It was two days well spent (yes, I was there for both days as well!) on recruiting new members and spreading the word to those who hadn't heard of us. Also, thanks to the Kent Group for all their efforts at the Garden of England Show in June. Unfortunately the weather was atrocious hence the crowds were a bit thin on the ground - but the Kent members did a good job of hanging on to the canopy when the storms broke! I am still receiving enquiries from visitors to both the above shows so am unable to give an overall number of new members as a result. Once again, thank you to all the members who gave up their time to help at each venue.

Please note that there is no half-yearly membership - but remember that anyone joining on or after 1st October gets membership extended to December of the following year. A reminder also that joint membership is available for £30 for two members at the same address.

Graham Stratford

British Motorcyclists Federation **News**

BERGMAN STEPS DOWN

The BMF's Chairman, Steve Bergman, has decided to stand down early, prior to this October's Annual General Council Meeting.

Elected at the 1995 AGC, Steve, 44, has been responsible for several notable changes including the BMF's affiliation to the Federation of European Motorcyclists (FEM); the overhaul of the BMF's financial and administrative systems and the setting up of the Structure Progress Group, a body charged with devising a new BMF structure and constitution designed to take the BMF into the 21st century.

Announcing his resignation Steve said "When I took on this job I said I was going to "open the BMF's throttle and see what it would do". Well, I've done that, but there has been a price to pay; the loss of my own personal freedom which has brought additional stresses to normal life. It is for these reasons that I have decided that I've now done my bit for motorcycling and it's time for someone else to grab hold of the bars and continue to steer this great organisation. The BMF is in good shape and my successor will have an excellent team to help them keep it on course".

Deputy Chairman Sharon Nash will become Acting Chairman in the run-up to this year's AGC which will be held on 18th October at York University.

NOTICES

HELP REQUIRED

Hi there, I am the secretary for the Northumberland group and I have been asked to write on our groups behalf. We have been given some dates for marshalling the Northern Horse Endurance Riders events. The dates are: 27th July, Hulne Park, Alnwick; 3rd August, Newcastleton. If anyone is interested in helping could they ring Flip Secombe on 0191 387 1054 and speak to the answerphone.

Many thanks in advance.

Heather Brown

SOUTH LONDON & SURREY GROUP - "EASY TRAIL RIDES"

Steve Sharp or Brian Wright intend to lead regular easy trail rides within Surrey.

The trail rides will cater for beginners, owners of large trail bikes or anyone who wants an easy ride.

Please contact Steve Sharp on 0181 773 4204 so that I can compile a list of riders and start organising the runs.

• GROUP NEWS •

Notice for Suffolk and Essex Group Members and Anybody Else in the Area

A joint run with Essex Group up the Peddar's Way on 17th August at 9.30am from the level crossing on the north side of the A11, north of Thetford - GR. 933874. All welcome. Those with trailers can either park at the start or in Tesco's car park near the BP garage on the A1075 between Thetford and the A11.

Five of us attended the meeting. I was the only paid up member but we have one returnee, another Dave... maybe we should call him Rodney? No new venue yet... next time... perhaps.

There was no run on the 29th, due to a last minute horse ride at Euston.

The horse rides are coming thick and fast. We've had offers of help from Essex and Cambridge and even from as far afield as London.

The next events are: July 26th, Horse Ride, Wimpole Way, Cambs.; July 27th Horse Ride, Hockham, Norfolk; August 3rd, Horse Event, Angles Way, Hommersfield (run if any demand); August 13th, Evening Run; August 17th, Sunday Run; August 31st, Horse Event, Euston Park, Suffolk (run if any demand), September 28th, Horse Event, Rendlesham Forest, Hollesley (run if any demand).

Richard May

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ROW NEWS

NORTON MALREWARD AND APPEAL TO THE HIGH COURT

All RuPPs must be reclassified. Some RuPPs are of small value to motor recreation; others are essential parts of the green lane network, worth fighting to protect. The principle of reclassification is that each RuPP is examined by the highway authority to see what evidence exists to demonstrate whether or not vehicular rights exist. Such evidence might be documentary (e.g. an inclosure award) or by users (e.g. the local AWDC, ARC or TRF having used the way regularly for upwards of 20 years). If there is adequately persuasive evidence of vehicular rights the RuPP should be reclassified as a byway open to all traffic (BOAT). If there is no adequate evidence then the reclassification is as a bridleway.

The highway authority examines the archives, weighs the evidence and makes a reclassification order. If it makes a BOAT order then there is a high probability of objections to the order which will trigger a public inquiry. If the highway authority makes an order for bridleway status then there is a possibility that vehicular users will object, arguing that the evidence shows that the true status is BOAT. Few Inspectors realise that a RuPP is something more than a footpath or bridleway.

The decisions of Planning Inspectors considering RoW cases have tended to favour the status of bridleway rather than Byway (i.e. BOAT) and one reason for this, we believe, is that BOAT decisions have been challenged in Court by land-owning and anti-motoring interests.

Motor vehicle users seem not to have been so active in fact the last major pro-vehicle appeal was the *Riley* case in 1989. Recently, Inspectors at RuPP reclassifications have been responding to claims that they must rubbish user evidence on the grounds that such use is illegal. This is based on the case *Robinson vs. Adair* and recent DoE advice. The problem that now faces us arises from a recent high court decision in *Robinson vs. Adair*. The facts of this case were: Motorists were driving their cars along a roadway which was in part private and in part private with a public footpath running along it. The purpose of this driving was to park on land at the end of the road for social purposes. At issue was the question whether or not, by so driving for many years, the actions of the motorists had given rise to a presumption of dedication by the owner of the road of a public right of way for vehicles. The court held that such a right of way had not been dedicated because the land used for parking was registered common land, the parking was therefore unlawful, and a series of unlawful acts cannot give rise to a presumption of dedication of rights.

If *Robinson vs. Adair* does mean that the action of repeatedly driving a motor vehicle on a footpath or bridleway cannot give rise to the presumption of dedication of a right of way for motor vehicles it ignores the fact that a RuPP is not a footpath

or bridleway by statutory definition. Does the no presumption rule in *Robinson vs Adair* apply to RuPPs as well as footpaths and bridleways? On the wording of the definition of RuPP, the view of senior judges Lord Denning in *Hood* and Lord Hailsham in *Mason* in past cases, the answer must be that it does not. It probably does not apply to those incorrectly defined footpaths and bridleways that are also UCRs, but that is another saga.

At least three RuPP reclassification cases at public inquiry have been decided by an inspector who has worked to Planning Inspectorate guidance notes which state that the *Robinson vs Adair* decision **does** apply to RuPPs. Inspectors are told by the Secretary of State that any vehicular use of RuPPs cannot go to show presumed dedication, being unlawful at least since the Road Traffic Act of 1930.

The first two cases were Reepham, Norfolk and Weston Patrick, Hants. If we examine the most recent PI at Norton Malreward in Somerset in September 1995 there was a first public inquiry. Somerset County Council had made the reclassification order for bridleway status and the local vehicle users (mainly TRF) had objected, stating that the correct reclassification should be as BOAT. A mixture of documentary and user evidence was put in. This was sufficient to convince the inspector that the true status of the way was BOAT. This meant that the inspector had to modify the reclassification order to show the new status, and the highway

authority had then to re-advertise it and invite further objections. The GLEAM faction objected, triggering a second public inquiry (February 1997) before a new inspector (the first having died). Mrs. Masters did her usual thorough job (allegedly, in-between obstructing her own RuPP) and told the inspector that any vehicular use of a RuPP is unlawful post-1930. The inspector, with his guidance note to hand, accepted this argument. He struck out the motor-user evidence accepted the first time around and reversed his predecessors decision, confirming the order in its original status of bridleway.

In the past vehicle user groups have been able to rely on what is generally called common law rights. If a right of way has hidden rights; perhaps a track is recorded as a footpath when an inclosure award shows it to be a carriageway; then users have a lawful

right to continue their vehicular use. So, when any individual RuPP has been wrongly reclassified as a bridleway (or footpath) because, as happens, the inspector is less than balanced or informed in his view of the individual evidence, local vehicle users might decide still to use the way and, if challenged, oppose any subsequent prosecution by bringing their superior status evidence to the magistrates court. That is all right in individual and occasional cases, but is no basis on which to assert the entire structure of trail riding.

What the Planning Inspectorate has done, by issuing to Inspectors this plainly wrong statement of the law, is to give a government position that all motor use of footpaths, bridleways and RuPPs, at least since 1930, is quite unlawful and a criminal act. Because this is an official position, most highway authorities will now follow that line (to them it is the line of least resistance). The Police and the GLEAM alerted landowner interests will be more likely to report and more inclined to prosecute any motor user using any un-reclassified RuPP. The motor user will then have to find documentary evidence sufficient to persuade an ill-informed, sceptical and probably biased magistrates court that the RuPP is a carriageway. That will be a hard task to do occasionally; it will be impossible to do regularly. Win one hundred cases and it proves nothing. Lose one case and it proves that trail riders and drivers are criminals.

Remember that user evidence has been a deciding factor in many RuPP reclassifications to BOAT. Under current thinking, applicants could easily trawl the records and seek modification orders to downgrade such BOATs to bridleways.

Norton Malreward looks to be a good case to fight if the decision is to fight. No outcome in the courts is certain in advance. There is always risk. The tactical attraction of Norton Malreward is that there were two public inquiries, with two Inspectors, the second coming after the *Robinson vs. Adair* decision and the issue of the guidance notes. The second Inspector was not given any extra documentary evidence. He based his decision on his wrong interpretation of the law as it affects the evidential value of the user evidence before him. Fight on that point alone, that the *Inspector* was wrong to dismiss the motor user as unlawful. Get that decision struck down and the case reverts to the position at the end of the first public inquiry; that the aggregate of documentary and user evidence is sufficient to show BOAT status.

To summarise there are many reasons why we need to go to appeal:

- i) confirm that driving on RuPPs is not illegal
- ii) re-validate our user evidence towards BOAT status (eg. when RuPPs are reclassified)
- iii) allow us to reclaim routes which have been incorrectly reclassified as bridleway
- iv) resolve whether motoring on those definitive footpaths or bridleways which we believe have higher rights is illegal
- v) resolve the DoE process of giving advice to Inspectors so that their advice is

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- correct
- vi) address our concerns that the Inspectorate operates without regard to quality control
 - vii) send a message to all involved in access that the TRF and LARA are prepared to appeal
 - viii) restore the morale of TRF and LARA RoW workers, some of whom have been dispirited

The effect of the combination of factors currently favouring the anti-motoring and access movement on green laning and trail riding must surely be obvious.

In conclusion, this situation pushes trail riders and drivers into a corner. The options are accept the Norton Malreward position and be forced into a constant defensive position every time a RuPP is driven, or comes up for reclassification, or fight it with an appropriate case. The Norton Malreward case offers as good a scenario for appeal as one is likely to get.

I am supporting LARA in the appeal with a substantial donation from the TRF Fighting Fund; **your** Fighting Fund given to the TRF to assert and protect **our** rights. If we win it will put us in a far stronger position to take trail riding into the next millennium and serves as an acknowledgement to all those trail riders past and present who fought for our right to ride motorcycles on green lanes.

Finally thanks to Tim Stevens and Alan Kind whose briefing notes helped me to compile this report. *Steve Neville*

BETHECAR MOOR (PARKA MOOR) NEAR GRISEDALE FOREST

There are about six months still remaining of the TRO to allow repair work to be carried out on this road. Unfortunately the **Metal** County Council road signs have been removed on several occasions. On one occasion a motorcyclist was seen removing the sign, and motorcycles are still using this route, thus ignoring the TRO. We do not know whether these motorcyclists are TRF members but these isolated actions are doing our image no good at all. So I ask you to please spread the word and ask all members to behave responsibly and be patient until the TRO is lifted. *Roger Harris, Cumbria Group Rep.*

BYWAY LAMPORT TO OLD LODGE

on Map 141 Grid Ref: SP770759 to SP793753

There is an anomaly on the definitive map, and the byway now turns left at the cottages two thirds along the byway, along a marked bridleway. The old route is blocked with a gate and marked "Footpath". Anyone riding this road **MUST** at this time use the left hand route along the bridleway and round the back of the houses. If anyone encounters problems please inform me and quote the definitive map.

We are at present trying to sort it out with the County Council

John Maddison, RoW Officer, South Northants

BYWAYS & BRIDLEWAYS TRUST

NEWS ITEM FOR TRAIL

The Byways and Bridleways Trust has been active in Northumberland, getting a "new" unclassified road put on to the County's list of streets maintainable at public expense.

The stretch of road in question is about 2.5 miles long, called *The Long Bank*, and runs off and on to the A686 Alston to Haydon Bridge road, a mile into Northumberland from the boundary with Cumbria.

The Long Bank is a straight but steep section of an early turnpike road from Hexham to Penrith, bypassed in 1823 by John MacAdam's turnpike, which is now the A686 hereabouts. The old stretch was never closed - the Act of Parliament in 1823 gave the turnpike trustees the power to abandon stretches of road when making the new line. This simply meant that these bits and pieces went back to being maintainable by the Parish, instead of by the trustees from tolls.

Trail riders have used *The Long Bank* since the TRF first started in the North East, and have never had any trouble. A couple of years ago, fencing went up alongside the open A686, and a gate across the Southern end of the old road. Mountain bikers had started to use the road and some were challenged - "Oi - this is private". A private sign went up on the new gate, so it was time for action. An approach to Northumberland's chief engineer got nowhere. Another approach to the

county solicitor brought progress. The CS asked for sight of all the evidence that *The Long Bank* was a publicly maintainable road before 1836 (the magic date) which was duly submitted. The landowner (coincidentally bearing the same family name as an original turnpike trustee) was given sight of this evidence and time to refute the claim. Once a reasonable time had elapsed, the county solicitor simply instructed the highways people to add *The Long Bank* to the list of streets, giving it at least some protection under law.

So, it can be done. It needs a county solicitor with a fair approach (try this in North Yorkshire and see how far you get...) and a desire to apply the law (try this in... etc.). Why not use a definitive map modification order to add *The Long Bank* as a BOAT, you ask? Two reasons. One that it was at the time not mostly used as if it were a footpath or bridleway - the only known users were trajj12

I riders and cyclists. Also adding a BOAT to the definitive map which was not formerly a RuPP does not establish automatically that it is publicly maintainable. Maybe it is silly, but "unclassified road" seems to have more feeling to it - more importance - than being just a byway on the definitive map?

A similar approach was also made in Cumbria. This time the reply was effectively "go and take a cold shower". Hostilities will be joined in due

RIDING IN BAJA - AH HA

If any intrepid TRFers have ever wondered about the 'Baja Cycle' experience in the Baja of California, here is my recent experience. In summary, great fun, a good bunch of guys running things - very safety conscious, regular rendezvous with the backup crew and a go at your own speed approach. The type of riding accommodates the 'leisurely spin' rider or the 'throttle wound to the stop, balls out' merchants.

Our seven-man group did a four-day tour, mostly riding sections of the Baja 500 Racecourse. Tod and George collected us at our hotel in San Diego with a van trailing bikes. Riding started across the border at Rancho Santa Veronica near Tecate (famous for



it's beer). A gentle start on dirt roads and some tarmac up to the El Compadre junction in order to get used to the bikes - all XR600's, excellent bikes, so forgiving (throttle out of any kind of trouble) and all well maintained. We had a spare bike in the van, which was never touched.

Then onto the real trail. The buzzards as we left the forest to climb into the semi-

desert had us worried for a bit! But no dead meat today and we reached the cabins at El Compadre hot, dusty, tired and very thirsty, despite the essential Camelbax water carriers that we carried. We managed to drink our hosts, Tod and George out of beer that night.

On the second day some more serious riding, a gradual climb up the mountains and an excellent lunch at Valle de Trinidad. Then on up again, through the cactus forest and across the dried up lake with the 10,000 foot mountain El Diabolo in the background. Then on to the infamous 'Sand College'. "When you have ridden this, you can ride any sand!" We chickened out first time because it was very, very hot and the beers were beckoning in San Filipe.

One feels that the Mexicans don't have cleanliness high in life's priorities, especially if you enter a town via the tip! Actually this is a delightful town at the tip of the sea of Cortez. First stop Bar Miramar, then the luxury of Hotel El Cortez. Time for a swim in the sea too.

Day three was the best day. After most riders breezed Sand College we had a long, tricky, but not tough, climb right into the high mountains, a lot of fast stretches and some real scary drops if you 'high side' taking a bend too fast. The pinnacle was Mike's Sky Rancho well known (Mecca?) to all two and four wheel off roaders in North Mexico. A long ride back on the last day covering much of the ground that we went by, but this time much faster with our confidence and skills improved.

A great trip, I would love to go with Tod and Co in Ambajadoro Adventure Tours again, but trying new trails next time. Expect a lot of dust and a good variety of terrains.

The cost? Return ticket to San Diego say £400. Full four-day tour \$1330 including bikes, accommodation, food, beer and everything. Some extra money for insurance and a Camelbax @ \$35 might be wise.

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LETTERS

IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

Recently whilst we were in Somerset on our regular annual weekend Group Run to the area, we came across another Group who as a result of their irresponsible behaviour had considerably antagonised the occupants of a cottage adjacent to the start of a lane that we were proposing to use.

It appears that initially having travelled the lane in a downwards direction, they then decided when they got to the bottom to turn round and ride back up. Not content with this, they then went back down again. It was when they got to the bottom of the lane that they were confronted by the hostile occupants. To prevent any further activity they blocked the entrance to the lane with a tractor.

The lane in question is a fairly steep and narrow rocky climb with loose rocks and shale, made more challenging when wet.

In the many years that I have been using this lane, I have never encountered any problems with the occupants of this cottage. I am hopeful that the local Group will be able to effect a damage limitation exercise.

Brian Read, Thames Valley

TRF AT MOTOCROSS GRAND PRIX!

Ron Carter (Glos. Group and ACU scrutineer) kindly volunteered to arrange for a TRF stand at the 250 and 125 World Championships at Foxhills, Swindon.

There are some 30,000 spectators over the Saturday (qualifying) and Sunday.

I mainly used Glos. Group display with some new items. Thanks to Jeff Ward, Graham Stratford, Aelwood Finch and Wayne Little.

With a modest display away from the main trading and bar area there was a steady stream of interested people.

Around 50 TRAIL magazines were given out with membership forms. Forms were also put on all the trail bikes in the parking area.

Thanks to all the Glos. Members - Bill Richards and Jackie German helped on the stand; Alan, Alex and Melvin visited twice for my moral support.

Special thanks to Neil (Swindon Group) and Angela Hennion for a very enjoyable stay for two nights at their bungalow. If you see any 'limited edition' mint flavour Kit-Kats snap them up in large numbers - they are reputedly lush.

Mark Holland, Glos. Group

"BOYS (AND GIRLS) OWN" ADVENTURES ON EXMOOR: AN EVENTFUL HORSE EVENT

The 2-day Golden Horseshoe ride certainly lived up to its reputation as the toughest test of endurance for horse and rider this year, with only 8 tired horses finishing the 100 miles. It caused a fair bit of exhaustion amongst the team of TRF volunteers marking and marshalling the route too!

The ride took place on Monday 19th May (50 miles clockwise) and Tuesday 20th (back the other way) and we started marking the route with looped tapes and flags on the Saturday. However the leisurely afternoon's marking planned took far longer than expected. Duncan had one puncture before starting and I was 3 hours late arriving, having kept Motorway Control amused with two punctures on my van in the space of 25 miles! (Why do punctures always come in threes?) Relieved of the price of 2 new tyres I finally got out on the moor and by some miracle found the rest of my team at a point where the route crossed a road. The next section across featureless, fog-enshrouded moor we had to mark using a compass, hoping that the flags were placed close enough together to see, should the ride days turn out equally misty.

Monday did, accompanied by endless falls of rain, ranging from drizzle to torrents, that set us wondering who was more insane - the horse-riders or ourselves? We concluded that they were, as they actually paid to take part in this extended cold bath. However horses must be exercised, whereas our bikes could have rested in the warm quite happily with no ill effects. Martin's XT350 actually had it's own stable to bed down in over the four days - I should think it needed some comforts after a nasty experience during Sunday's marking of the route...

We were looking for a path marked on the map up a combe beside a stream and had set off following a likely contender that started innocently enough between trees lured us up a pleasant rise then narrowed viciously and clung dangerously to the side of a precipice. It then gave us the unwelcome thrill of a sharp vertical section followed by a short respite before a selection of diagonal roots slanting off to certain death over the side. Discretion being the better part of valour I stopped at this point and called back to Martin, asking if he could find enough ground to park and give me some assistance over the roots (a big body on the outside edge could be most useful in breaking the fall!) He duly helped get my bike safely to the top and we went back for his, of which curiously only one wheel rim was visible. He'd chosen an unusual parking angle down the bank, but we managed to set it straight on the narrow and, despite an impromptu wheelie over the steep part he reached the easier part before the roots. Horror of horrors, there a little wobble led to a dab and the receiving bank promptly gave way! I watched first Martin roll head over heels out of sight, followed, after a moment's teetering indecision, by his faithful (or wicked) XT, end over end thumping down in hot pursuit.

Death, spinal injury and the fact that I'd left my first aid kit in the van all came to mind before the relief of hearing Martin answer my slightly panicky call. Amazingly he'd rolled clear of the bouncing bike, which had fortunately lodged it's crushing weight on a raised bank beside the stream, rather than on top of him. We eventually heaved it upright expecting the worst but somehow it too was unscathed after a 30-foot drop. A bent bungee end was the only evident damage and that straightened up to see another day!

The XT was re-christened "Terminator" for its indestructible qualities and it's attempt on Martin's life. A hysterical hour or more was then spent removing Terminator from it's stream bed predicament - no easy task - and we made the sensible

decision to mark the alternative path around the head of thecombe.

As Martin proved, and I know from painful experience, it's not always the hardest bits where you part company with your mount. On Monday, battling through fog and blatting through bog to catch up with the horses, we came upon a distraught horse-less rider, very relieved at our timely arrival. Her steed had somehow ditched her on an easy flat path across open moor! She'd been searching in vain for some time, so without thinking of the handling problems (luckily she was very light, but rigid - with fear I presume) I invited her aboard the pillion to comb the moor whilst Bill rode on to the next checkpoint. Four legs and a tail amongst the misty tree trunks made our hearts leap but it was just one of the resident moorland pony herds. Fortunately Bill returned very quickly with news that her beloved 'Jen' had been caught by a passing motorist, who'd braved the bogs in business suit and high heels, and was safely ensconced in a nearby loose box (the horse that is, not the motorist!).

Other notable events of the big weekend included a near hypothermia situation, a trail rider in the role of groom, left holding the horses awaiting the mobile blacksmith and an attack on an innocent trail rider by a straying Renault on a bend, resulting in a collision between wing mirror and throttle hand. The mirror came off worse - it sustained multiple fractures whilst Alan escaped with mere bruising - somehow remaining alive and upright!

Luckily Tuesday's weather improved and we had a drier day re-marking easier alternatives to two of the steep zig-zag climbs where horses and bikes had struggled the day before, checking the course before (great fun) and de-marking after the depleted number of horses tackling the second day's ride.

It was a beautiful route, hardly touching tarmac, with plenty of open moor, interesting to ride but a pain to mark - carrying vast bundles of 3-4 foot flag poles across your bike tends to cramp your style a little, especially when you forget their existence through narrow bridle-gates! There were woodland sections, fords, puddles stretching to lakes, ditches and bogs, rocks and mud to negotiate and wonderful scenery and wildlife (when the mist cleared) in the very remotest parts of Exmoor.

After 3½ days of quite demanding riding I must admit to being somewhat tired, to put it politely. How will I survive 18 days of riding during my charity trail ride crossing the length of Britain I wonder? (see May's TRAIL). Horse Endurance Events are excellent training - lots of jumping on and off to position route-markers but also miles of uninterrupted scenic riding in normally 'no-go' areas (ie. bridleways, etc.) and altogether a very enjoyable experience. If you haven't volunteered to help out at one give it a go. I thoroughly recommend it.

Jacky German, Glos./W. Mids.

REPAYING THE DEBT

Trail 222 (Feb 97) reported our weekend on and near the Ridgeway. The weekend on the 10th and 11th of May allowed some Lancashire Lads to repay the debt. So three members of the Swindon (DR 350) group savoured some Yorkshire and Lancashire lanes. Roger Davies provided them with accommodation etc.. Simon Guy, Phil Lord

and Ian Wright completed the Lancs/Honda Team. Bill Spooncer, Trevor Watson and Dave joined us at Hellifield just before 9.00am. Hellifield is famous for its Cattle Market, so its a pity it is being demolished! I suppose Dave will be relieved to know that I do not know his last name. He arrived on Saturday with bike, riding gear, etc. but no bike keys!! At least the lack of surname allows a little anonymity! We arranged to meet him in Hawes for lunch. We set off riding slow past the row of terraced houses, over the railway crossing, along the lane over Hellifield Moor to pick up Langber Lane. The coach road took us north to Settle. Stockdale Farm lane provided the three guests with a gentle introduction to rocky lanes. The farmer is no longer padlocking the gate at Arncliffe Cote, so we sauntered casually along to Halton Gill (a name derived from Old English and Norse which means 'The farm in a nook of land by a ravine'). Ian Wright took me on a detour to show me a nice cafe in Arncliffe, a useful bit of info if you're near there around lunch-time. Dave Loney asked riders to exercise care on certain routes in Trail 209 (Jan '96), so we planned the day so we could travel over Horse Head Moor in a northerly direction to Raisgill.

As time seemed to be flying Roger had a new master plan. He left us at Raisgill and travelled north to meet Dave at Hawes. We then agreed a route so he could meet us travelling north to Hawes. I took the party down to Starbotton, to do 'the loop'. Everybody enjoyed the climb, and the 'boggy bits' over Starbotton Out Moor. A strange name Starbotton, it was called Staverbotten in the 14th Century and means the valley bottom where staves are cut! Stake Allotments was next and it was a relief to meet Roger on the lane from Stalling Busk to Marsett. Buttersett High Pasture took us to Hawes and lunch!

Suitably refreshed we set off for Lady Anne Clifford's Highway. Bill and Trevor found the climb to Cotter Riggs quite difficult. An off-road tyre that looks like an Avon Roadmaster doesn't help! Bill had a go on my XR with a 'newish' Vulcanduro on the back. He was amazed at the agility of the bike and the grip from the tyre. We turned back after Hell Gill Bridge. Where had the day gone! To get back sooner we cut out Monkeybeck Grains and Artengill Beck (which was a pity, maybe next time). We did Gearstones and the Pennine Way from Cam End to Horton-in-Ribblesdale, where we stopped for coffee. Roger left us and went home as he had ridden up to Hellifield on his bike. We did the Ribble Way going east from Helwith Bridge, and the Stainforth climb. We took the lane that goes past Lodge Farm just south of Settle, which connected us with Langber Lane and home. We arrived about 7.45pm, a little tired (you have to remember the average age of the group is about 90), but happy. Judging by the comments, everybody enjoyed their day, and our guests were surprised at the variety of conditions that we enjoy 'Up-North'.

Sunday was a complete contrast, it was more sedate. We started at the Barn, J2 Rivington. We travelled a variety of lanes and some NW Water concessionary routes. We rode in a clockwise loop riding near Wheeton, Abbey Village, Tockholes, returning down Georges Lane back, to Rivington Top Barn for a coffee. Our friends left about 2.30, we wished them a safe journey home. Good lanes, good bikes, good food, good companions, and a good time was had by all. Us 'old buggers' couldn't

ask for more.

Many happy returns, Alan Hodson

SOME JOYS OF DR350 OWNERSHIP

A few weeks ago, I'd been bouncing the trusty DR over rocky terrain when the engine died. I started it up easily enough but a short while later it made strange noises and died again. A brief examination revealed that a rock had pushed a half-inch diameter hole in the sump, a couple of inches behind the drain plug, and I had suffered 'instant oil change'. This little incident revealed two things. Firstly, the short, standard bash plate leaves most of the sump 'bulge' unprotected and, secondly, the aluminium crankcase castings are barely 3mm thick at this point.

As soon as I got home, I repaired the hole by applying lots of 'TB Weld' and pop-rivetting a piece of aluminium plate over it. Needless to say, the next thing I did was to fit a sturdy extension to the bash plate (using more hefty pop rivets!).

How did I get the bike home? I fixed the hole with a puncture repair outfit and borrowed some (diesel) oil from a friendly motorist. Okay, I did back up the tyre patch with a cloth pad, held against the sump using a tyre lever, duct tape and cable ties. However, when I removed this lot at home, the patch was still firmly stuck in place. Strange but true.

The general consensus seems to be that DR350s are difficult to start. It does take a bit of a knack but here are three tips:

- 1 If the engine is warm and won't start, pull in the decompressor, open the throttle fully, briskly kick it over two or three times, then start as normal. This trick can be done with the ignition either on or off
- 2 If the bike has been left for several weeks and won't start, drain the petrol out of the carburettor fuel bowl and let some fresh fuel in. The bike will then start first or second kick. I don't know why this works but it does.
- 3 If you still can't get it started, trade it in for the version with the electric start.

The electrics on DRs are fairly bullet-proof; even when subjected to mud and water. Several things, however, need to be watched. The ignition switch contacts have a tendency to corrode so it is worth flushing the switch out occasionally with WD-40 or similar. This also happens to DR400s and DR600s so might be down to Suzuki's choice of switch manufacturer. The other thing to watch is that wet mud

SPAIN

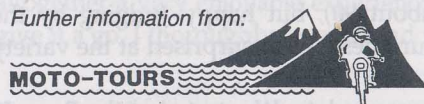
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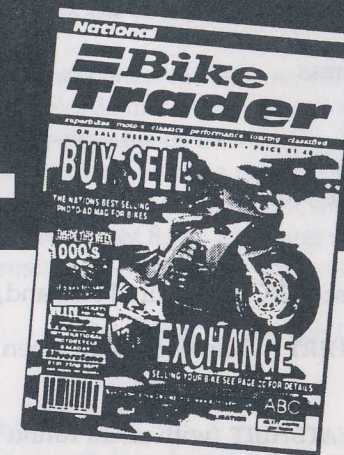
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tends to collect on top of the battery, causing it to slowly discharge. While in the battery area, remove and discard the horrible black plastic 'envelope' around the connects, This tends to trap water and it is much better to just soak the connectors in Waxoyl or seal them in silicon gasket compound.

Finally, an alternative to rim clamps and the associated skinned knuckles at wheel changing time. Drill two or three equi-spaced holes 3.5mm in diameter through each side of each wheel rim, about 6mm in from the very edge of the rim. If you are feeling brave you can actually do this with the tyre in place! Screw a no.8 by 1/2" self tapping screw into each hole as far as it will go using a large, snug-fitting screwdriver. This will prevent tyre creep even with pressures as low as 7 or 8 psi. Applying silicon gasket compound to the screw will prevent water rusting it and also prevent it coming out.

Dave King, Lodden Vale Group

ARMSTRONG MT50

Richard Jones joins *the navy navy and 'MODs' on an MT50*

Well, being Autumn again the time of year we all love best I found myself without a suitable mount for trail riding. I scoured the papers for a few weeks to no avail then decided to visit the ex-MOD auctions in Gloucester. After much prodding and poking I had a short list of six bikes out of the twenty or so Armstrongs on offer that I was about to bid on. I ended up with a 1987 MT50 that has done some 12,000kms (7500 miles) from new and, as I wheeled it out of the compound towards my car I started to wonder if I had made the right decision. Japanese 2-stroke and 4-stroke trail bikes I know about, but this was a total mystery. I knew the Rotax motor was a good lump and I consoled myself on the drive home with the thought that if the army favoured them for so long Armstrongs couldn't be all bad.

Well, I'm glad to tell you that two weeks and a lot of minor adjustments have seen this bike become quite a useful bit of kit. It does have all the right equipment as standard low compression (7:1) Rotax motor, XR forks, Domino controls, "0" ring chain and Arkront rims. It is however drum braked, twin shocked, and matt green all over.

The bike has seen very little action. I have spent a lot of time making sure it is serviceable and can say that it appears the army maintain them very well.

The things I have done to it since I bought it are mods to suit my riding i.e. proper dirt tyres, reduced the width of the handle bars, 15 tooth front sprocket, (down from 17) and repositioning of the rear shock mounts. This was perhaps the most needed mod. The bike had a very laid back feel due to the rear end being too low. It didn't have a lot of ground clearance and turned slowly. I have made up new mounting plates for the swinging arm shock points, and moved these 75mm closer to the engine. This increases the clearance by nearly 50mm and makes the steering angle a lot tighter so the bike turns much quicker.

Having got used to it now on a couple of trail rides I do like the torque from the Rotax 500, it goes anywhere I usually tackle with ease. It's not the fastest trail bike around but does feel surprisingly light now that all the unnecessary bits are off. I'm

hoping for some reliable cost effective green laning. Anybody want to join me?

Richard Jones

PR DISASTER OR NOT?

I was somewhat surprised to read some of Tony Stuart's comments regarding the Coast-to-Coast in last month's TRAIL.

Although there were 11 groups, there are not 11 different routes between Scarborough and Hest Bank. Some trails are bound to be used by most if not all of the groups. Furthermore, no attempt is made to ensure that the groups are spread evenly over the available routes, so they could all choose the same trail by chance. The residents living along these routes, (plus any walkers encountered) must be driven to distraction, and are no doubt stung into complaining to anyone who will listen, regaling them with lurid stories about hundreds of motor-bike scramblers passing their front door.

I am not against riders riding the coast to coast route, (it must be a wonderful experience), only that they should not all do it at the same time. If the same number of riders travelled the route in small groups spread over twelve months, they would hardly be noticed. The same goes for any surface damage caused, as the apparent environmental impact would be much reduced.

High profile mass events are a PR disaster for the TRF, and running them when the Vehicles on Byways Consultation is in progress must be the biggest own goal in the history of the TRF. Even if we manage to resist these proposals, don't think for one moment that this will be the end of them. As society becomes more affluent, and mobility increases, pressures on the countryside will increase, and sooner more probably than later, these proposals will reappear and be pushed through by the overwhelming force of public opinion. We live in a democracy after all.

On the other hand, thinking laterally, perhaps the Coast-to-Coasters have already taken all this on board and are ahead of me. Realising that our trail riding days are numbered, perhaps they have decided that they may as well 'give it some stick' while they can, and to hell with future generations.

If this is the case, will someone please let me know, as I would love to ride the Coast-to-Coast next year!

GWR Smith, Cumbria

INSURANCE

At a recent club meeting a member brought up the subject of insurance. He had recently purchased an XR250 and rang the BMF for an insurance quote. They refused to insure the bike because it was a "competition model". The member tried to convince them that it was a fully road legal bike but they would not be convinced. We find this to be very disappointing as the BMF is a pro-biking organisation and the TRF are affiliated members!

The discussion then widened and another member told of a recent incident where a horse and rider had been injured as a result of the horse being frightened by two motorcyclists when using a green lane. The riders did not stop. Fortunately the

lady rider had a mobile phone and was able to summon assistance. She needed Hospital treatment and a vet had to be called to the horse. Fortunately we believe that the injuries were not too serious.

The questions which arise from these two incidents are:

1. In the event of a similar incident with a horse or person on an unsurfaced road would the rider of the motorcycle be covered by insurance?
2. Is a Club Run considered to be an "organised event"? If so, would separate insurance cover be necessary?
3. Would/could the Run Leader be held responsible in these circumstances?

Do we have a legal person/member out there who could answer these questions please?

Roger Harris, Cumbria Group Rep.

MORE ON THE BMW R80GS

I had until recently owned a 91/H R80GS for the past three years.

This year I competed in the Land's End Trial on it using trail tyres, clearing most sections but I must admit it was more than a handful on the slippery wet Cornish ones.

Nevertheless I finished the event and the following day rode the 270 miles home at an average speed of 67mph.

Now, that's versatility.

Mike Fowler, Surrey

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BRENDAN CHASE B&B Lake Windermere. From £14.00 each x 4 sharing. Bike lock-up. Parking. All rooms C/H, CTV, H & C. Pub & Grub handy. Tel: 01539 445638.

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SINGLE BIKE TRAILER Old but in good condition, mini wheels, ramp, trailer board, (will carry road bike). £75 ono. Tel: 01604 720695 after 5pm.

SUZUKI DR350 Electric start. May '96. 2600 miles. Luggage rack. Choice of tyres. Various spares and workshop manual. £2895 or swap good TT250R. Tel: 01829 733519.

DT175MX Under 6000 miles, alloy rims, MT21 tyres, tax and test. Just superb condition, £650. Phone 01772 792231 (Preston) for full spec.

SUZUKI DR350S '96, 16 months old, 9000 miles, new rear wheel bearing, brake pads, road tyres, data tag, great starter, excellent condition, taxed, £2600. Phone 01494 474807 (Bucks.).

WANTED Exhaust for BMW R80GS. Tel: 01200 445657.

FOR SALE Honda XL185 in XL125R Pro-link

frame, disc front brake, tax, MOT, some spares, £350. Tel: 01737 553599 (Surrey).

YAMAHA WR200 "P" reg, trail use only, £2500. Tel: 0973 253863.

KAWASAKI KLX250 "K" reg, good condition, £2200. Tel: 0973 253863.

YAMAHA WR200R "L" reg, "O" ring, new rear Dunlop. Good condition. Offers around £1750. Tel: Cambridge 872367.

DT175MX 1978, "S" reg, low mileage, no timewasters. Good beginner bike. Fair Offers. Tel: Philip Spencer 01274 830402.

YAMAHA WR200 1997 "P" reg. The Rolls Royce of trail bikes. As new, £2850. May part-ex XR250. Tel: 01200 445657.

FOR SALE Pair of Sebac shock absorbers to fit XL125 or XL185 - 15 1/2" centres, not many bumps from new. Excellent condition cost over £90 new. Sell for £50. Tel: Ian on 01706 350215 (Rochdale).

XR250RT "P" reg. 4 months tax. Low miles, excellent condition. Offers. Tel: 01706 625144 Marc Vipond.