

GROUPS

BLACK COUNTRY Chris Braznell, Tel: 0121 421 3086
1 & 3 Tues, 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
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, *The Old Guinea, Ridge, Near Potters Bar*

HIGH PEAK & POTTERIES
Simon Lowe, Tel: 01298 24388
1st Tue, *Stafford Arms, Bagnall & 3rd Tue, Cheshire Cheese, Buxton*

ISLE OF WIGHT Mark Gregory, Tel: 01983 867730
Last Thur, *The White Lion, Arretton, 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 450289
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 Simon Mason, Tel: 01773 713188
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 Tue, *The Phoenix, Twyford, 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 Ron Rickarby, Tel: 01271 326653
2nd Wed, *The Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham, A396 1 mile north of Tiverton*

WEST YORKSHIRE Gordon Carr, Tel: 01729 830569
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, Pendiswell Park, Worcs.*

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



Patron: Lord Strathcarron

TRAIL

DECEMBER, 1997

No. 232

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

EDITOR: Michael "Nettlebed" Pedley.



Stuck in Rusland Ford

picture by Roger Harris

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All Contributions to the Editor Please keep it short and sweet!
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EDITOR

There can be no doubt that our Fellowship is one of the most able and active of the national motorcycle clubs. We have a strong participating membership, an enviable and respected RoW record and we have even managed to recover from the body-blow dealt by our late treasurer (thanks to Jeff Ward & Co).

An outsider reading our November issue of TRIAL could be forgiven therefore for assuming that we are anything but able and active when we are struggling to fill one of the Fellowship's key posts, that of our National Secretary.

Since taking over as Editor of TRAIL, I have come to know a great many of you personally. We have ridden the Coast-to-Coast together. You have welcomed me into your Groups and guided me on some of the country's finest trail riding. Believe me, if you can put up with me for a weekend then holding the post of National Secretary is well within your capabilities!

Unbelievably, it is now six years since I took on the Editor's job. I was always one of those who hated meetings, despised committees and 'joined the TRF to ride not talk'. I still don't know how I got railroaded into it - but a lot of the lads in the Group promised to help if I would be the 'figurehead' - and they did and I think that we became a stronger, more active Group as a result.

I also got to know, by attending those hated meetings, just how much work a small minority of you put into the Fellowship just to keep the wheels turning - particularly on the RoW side. I too began to enjoy putting a little bit back and rubbing shoulders with those of you at the 'sharp end' of our great organisation.

Many of you will have noticed however, that the infamous 'Nettlebed' nickname has disappeared from my new address. Yes, sadly I have moved house and at the moment my belongings are in storage and my future is far from settled. Regretfully therefore, I too must look for a replacement and sadly, for me, this will be my last Editorial.

The next meeting of your Executive Committee will be 24th January 1998. From that date we could be without Secretary and Editor. I do hope not, for if such a situation were to continue for any length of time it would surely weaken our Fellowship. Gentlemen, (and Ladies), now is the time to look to your consciences and ask yourself "What can I do for the TRF?" (apologies JFK).

Yes, either of these posts will consume some of your time if you were to take one but is an hour or so a week really too much to put back into a hobby that gives you so much pleasure?

My greatest wish, as I type this for the last time, is that when we meet on January 24th, not one but several applications will have been received for our vacant posts but it now only remains for me to thank you all for your support, your invaluable contributions to TRAIL, your constructive comments and interest and, if I've offended any of you in my six years as Editor - tough!

NETTLEBED

Chairman's Chat for December 1997

After such a difficult year it has seemed like bliss since the AGM not having to spend every evening at my desk on TRF business. I have now rediscovered evening television - mind you too much of that can get a bit boring! More importantly I have been able to turn my mind to trail riding - and get out plenty! Got to be a lot more fun than being on the telephone or writing letters. Really though it has been most enjoyable being out in our lovely Cornish countryside, in good company, in the fresh air, riding a good bike, (CRM), having convivial lunches, (I had to look it up as well - it means sociable eating and drinking in good company), at a time of the year when most of the Emmets (visitors) have gone home, the nettles and flies have died off and it's wet underwheel - whoopee! Liz (her indoors) keeps asking when I am going to grow up - I say I am putting it off as long as possible!

Thank you Stuart Alford from Lincolnshire, for telling us how much you have enjoyed your first year in the TRF. Your letter, last month, was very refreshing and rekindles old memories in my mind, with names like Walna Scar, Gatesgarth and Foxup Moor. During my own trail riding career, starting in 1971 when I joined the TRF, I have ridden in numerous English Counties, a few Welsh ones, in France and in Spain and I think the enjoyment becomes greater rather than less. Although I am one step ahead of you Stuart, in the fact that I now have grandchildren wanting rides on the bike, I have decided that I am going to keep doing it as often as I can whilst I can still get my leg over. Trail riding that is!

I have received a cheque from Si Melber of TrailBike Magazine, towards our Norton Malreward Appeal. He has also put a piece in the latest edition of TBM (January 1998, page 7) seeking support for our cause - and has already received some cheques! Thank you very much Si!

On the 19th of January I go to the House of Lords to speak to the Parliamentary All Party Motorcycle Group about trail riding and the TRF. That Group is Chaired by our Patron, Lord Strathcarron, and comprises Members of the House of Lords, MPs and Euro MPs. Spreading the word? Will report back.

The TRF has given me 26 years of great enjoyment, mostly in excellent company and long may it continue to do so. And for all of you as well!

P.S. By the time you read this - on Christmas Day(?) - I hope to have received some nominations for the posts of Deputy Chairman, National Secretary and Editor, in time for our next National Meeting on the 24th of January.

P.P.S. MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY JOLLY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

Tony Stuart

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ROW NEWS

Dorset Group News Report

Dave Vatcher and Pete Boyce reported that we had lost our case in the Chesilbourne Byway enquiry. This is obviously very disappointing, especially since our case was so well researched and presented.

In the meantime, thanks to everyone who fought our case so well, especially the two Daves, Pete Boyce, John Long and Tim Stevens.



• The Holy Trail •

Letter from The Times, Thursday November 6th, 1997

Prayers and pints

from the Reverend M. J. Hensman

Sir, I am an ordained Christian minister who rides a motor cycle.

I sometimes find it easier to pray and to worship God while on the bike than in some church services. Mind you it is not a good idea to close your eyes in prayer or to lift your hands in praise.

Yours faithfully,

M. J. HENSMAN,

89 Sparrow Farm Road,

Stoneleigh, Epsom, Surrey.

Article sent in by Gwyn Thomas

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*We welcome old
members and new!*

8 - 3 AWAY

For the last weekend in September, 8 Dorset members went to the Lake District, Roger Harris having kindly advised and marked our maps (a benefit of National Membership). Friday pm saw us climbing and some crawling from the Brendan Chase B & B in Windermere over the Garburn and Gatescarth passes to the Haweswater Reservoir, a return trip of about 30 miles. This took about 5 hours with many breaks whilst John Williamson threw his week old, anti-social, XR400 down more times than he has fingers and toes. He wasn't the only one to crash and burn with others in the group falling victim to what must be the hardest trail around (unless someone else knows different). For those who have not ridden them, the surface is rock slab and loose boulders on steep gradients with the occasional step. The amazing views are best admired whilst stationary!

Saturday morning saw us, a much lowered XR400 and it's much bruised pilot, following John Long for a second time. Travelling down the east side of Windermere and up the east side of Coniston we rode a few lanes to break the monotony of tarmac before tackling Walna Scar and the lane towards Hare Hall before back tracking to Coniston Town. Walna Scar was easier than Friday's ride but still one or two had their moments. Dave Greenslade and Terry Stapleton being the first to get stuck on a small step. At a right hander, Dick performed a beautiful pirouette to the left as he tried not to ride straight on up the bank. He held on to the bars, and professed to have been in total control having done this before. Cleans on certain parts of the climbs met with applause from members of the walking fraternity, not something we are used to down south. As for John Williamson and the 400, there still was a serious vertigo problem.

After fuelling up we rode two lanes in Grizedale Forest, on the first we had our one and only breakdown when Pete Leggs DR350 refused to do anything but idle. After many suggestions as to the cause, and much swearing from Pete, the DR ran faultlessly but frightened. We continued to ride south and around Windermere taking in all the lanes we'd missed during the morning to finish our day back at our B & B. Our mileage that day was a little over 100 miles.

Sunday saw myself in the lead, and a repeat crossing of the Garburn and Gatescarth passes then on past the Haweswater Reservoir towards Pooley Bridge and the Old Coach Road. The few lanes en-route were ridden, but a high percentage of tarmac was necessary to take in the well known lanes. That afternoon whilst riding close to St. Johns Beck we had our first confrontation with a walker, his wife and the Pathfinder map. He greets us with "This is a footpath, you can't ride here". I explained it was not, he told me what could use a Bridlepath and it wasn't motorbikes, but it was still a footpath and he knew best. His wife accused Dick of knowing he was in the wrong, she could "tell by the

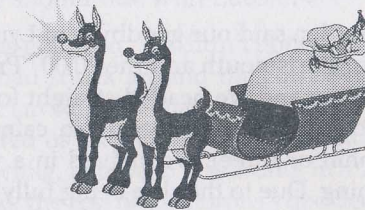
expression on his face", and so we rode on. We were on the Bridlepath. The footpath he thought he was on was closer to the river.

Our weekend was drawing to a close, we rode the lanes close to Little Langdale and took a peep over the edge of a disused Quarry. The blue water below was allegedly 300ft from us and about 100ft deep, but we didn't have time to climb down the shaft to the caves at water level. We returned to our lodging via the only lane with any mud, 8 happy trail riders and about 114 miles on the trip.

We were rudely awakened on Monday morning by Dave Greenslade, who rushed into the large and very comfortable room 4 of us shared with the words "Three bikes have been stolen". This news was the last thing we wanted to hear after such a good weekend's trail riding.

The thieves had crooped the padlock and taken the bikes. The Police were later able to tell us that a van had also been stolen that night. If you hear or see anything regarding these bikes please contact the Police and the owners that were listed in last months TRAIL.

Tony Summers, Dorset Group



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PICOS DE EUROPA TOUR

WEST WILTSHIRE TRF +1 - OCTOBER, 1997

Loonies present:-

- TRF: - Pete Anstey, ("Tyre Fingers"/"Its a Well Defined Track!")
- Les Packer, ("Pakamaicoaman"/"No Negative Vibes!")
- Vic Price ("Vic Pricsssssse"/"I've got a slow one again!")
- Dave Dunn, ("I'll have a gin and tonic"/"LEG!"/"Rucksack?")
- Paul Ludlow, ("Eth eth eth eth eth,, Eth eth eth eth eth."/"KNEE!")
+1: - Mike Woody ("Project Leader"/"King of the Hill"/"Call me BOSS")

Saturday 4th October dawned, and after much frantic last minute packing, the 4 amigos gathered at Vic Prices house and engaged in some bike shuffling, before heading off to Mike Woodward's Lodge at Horton Heath near Ringwood.

We loaded Mike's DR350 on the trailer, said our goodbyes to Lynne, his missus, and his noisy dog, and made tracks for Portsmouth and the 20:00 "Pride of Bilbao" ferry to Espana. The ship left bang on time and we headed straight for the bar and a few pints of San Mig.... After a pretty uneventful crossing in calm, warm conditions (where we spotted the odd dolphin or three), we arrived in a very dark Bilbao at 08:00 local time on Monday morning. Due to the ship being fully booked with "Mini Cruise" Wrinklies, no cabins were available for Dave Dunn and Pete Anstey, so they flew out from Heathrow on Saturday evening and were due to meet us at the port when we docked.

Monday 6th October

Lo and behold, there they were as we came through customs. I don't think I have ever seen 2 more relieved people, when they saw that their bikes were still on the trailer!

3 hrs later, after being tailgated by Les's van on downhills, and losing sight of him in the rearview mirror on uphill, we popped out of the Deva gorge and were heading into Potes. (Our illustrious National leader Tony Stuart - TRF chairman - asked us to check out the Hotel del Oso in Cosgaya. He was booked in there, but had to cancel his trip at the last minute). The hotel looked very nice and comfortable, but we decided it was a bit too remote (15kms from Potes), and they could only take us for 3 nights anyway.

So we headed back towards Potes, and just outside, spotted a log cabin type place set back off the road. El Cabana was just the ticket. Just one drawback - no bar - but the guy was happy for us to take booze back. He is a keen mountainbiker so he understood our needs. Mike and Pete negotiated an attractive rate and we were in - for the next 5 days only, as matey had a large party coming in later in the week. He did however manage to book us in to the Hotel Valdecoro for our last 2 nights, at the same keen rate (kept it in the family by the look of it, cos his face was in a lot of

pictures hanging up in the Valdecoro!).

By 15:00, Monday afternoon, after settling into our rooms we kitted up and most of us had our first taste of the Picos trails. Luds had been in consultation with Pete over the maps and shot off up a track behind Potes. Back down and start again! This time we were up and running and a nice little climb took us up over the mountains to the top station of the Fuente De cable car. The views are stunning, and if you suffer from vertigo, don't wander out onto the "cattle grid" viewing platform! It will make yer toes curl!! 900m straight down!

We hung around at the top for a few minutes and chatted to a Brit family that had come up the easy way. They were a bit gobsmacked that we were up there on motorbikes! After waving them off on their way back down, we made our way to the Avila refugio and then back down to Espinama via a great, loose gravel zig-zag downhill track for a coffee. The guy at the cafe was very chatty (in Spanish) and told us that he rode a 360 Bultaco Frontera. (like a nutter, if his hand waving was anything to go by!). Maybe he should ride with Luds!!!

While all the chat was going on, we didn't notice that the weather was on the change. Some black clouds had snuck around the corner of the mountains, and very soon, some heavy Cantabrian rain was hammering down, forcing us to scurry for cover. The bar owner ushered us into a part-completed store room while we waited for the rain to abate. Meanwhile, Pete who was riding in a lumberjack shirt and didn't have any waterproofs - like the rest of us morons - decided to make a run for it. We let him go! Luds decided to try out his new PakJak and kept running out in the rain to watch the raindrops bouncing off the material. Sad boy. When the rain eased a bit, we decided to leg it, and had a blast down the twisty bit of tarmac back to Potes. That was the end of the first day. An eminently forgettable meal followed in a restaurant recommended by Brittany Ferries. Things gastronomic, were to improve as the week went on however!

Tuesday 7th October

After a breakfast of pancakes, honey, decent coffee and some strange cakey things, we headed into town to load up with our picnic lunch supplies of bread, chorico sausage, nuts, apples and Asturian blue cheeses. There were not many volunteers to carry the rucksack!! Amazing how many people claim that they can't ride in them isn't it? I used to be one of them, but I've seen the light. As long as you have a sac with one of those little sternum straps on it, you don't even know that you have it on.. No, its not like wearing a colostomy bag Ludlow!!!

Today was when the fun started. Les's XR started to misfire. My trusty XR600 developed yet another sodding puncture. A slow one in the rear hoop. (I have had more punctures on my 600 than on all my other dirt bikes put together. Anyone got any ideas why?? And no. It's not because I am a fat sod!!). At the end of every lane, I had the pump out and had to blow about 10 psi into the tyre. In the evening, with the aid of Pete Anstey, and to the amusement of the rest of the gang, my part

knackered D903 was replaced with a MUCHO knobbly Barum Stone King. That, I thought would be the end of my troubles - but no.

I can't remember the route, but one of the trails we took today climbed away from the valley floor on a tarmac road with no straight bits on it at all. Constant bend swinging all the way up. As we climbed higher, we came to a narrow tunnel hacked out of the bare rock, and just at the entrance, we stopped to take in the view of the mountains and the roofs of the village we had passed through, now several thousand feet below us. We continued through the tunnel and the exhaust gave a really grunty BRAAAP in there!

Another memorable part of the day occurred after we had crossed a really isolated bit of country reminiscent of some of the more remote parts of Wales. We came to a junction in the trail where we had our picnic lunch. Pete said that if we went off round the corner of the mountain, we would get to one of the smaller upland lakes, so we decided to have a shuffty. Just round the corner, as the track started to climb, we came across a bit of concrete track that had cracked up and fallen away. The approach was covered in loose stones on top of concrete and was a real bear to get up. Loads of manhandling and cursing finally got us up - even if we were all blowing hard!

We then went on up to the rather rocky upland meadow where the lake was. Just before getting there, Luds overbalanced and plopped off the side of his XR400, which then pinned him to the bottom of the ditch. Dave came to a halt on his DR and promptly fell off, where his bike trapped his leg on a rock! (shades of Tony Steele on Sarn Helen flashed in front of my eyes - especially as he started yelling "Leg! Leg!"). Luckily, it was no more than abject panic, and as soon as the bike had been prised off him, he was all smiles again, even if his helmet was covered in cowshit from his reverse face-plant! Good job he wasn't facing the other way!! Would we have noticed?? (Only joshing, Dave). Then, to cap it all, Mike dropped his DR and punched a hole in his elbow. The armour in his jacket was the guilty party. Makes you wonder if it's sensible wearing 70's gear Ha-Ha!! He picked himself up, dusted himself down, and then discovered that his bars were bent. Good job things happen in three's, or Pete or myself could have been next, but I like to think that our supreme riding skill prevented any further similar disasters!

By early afternoon, Les had decided to ride back to the hotel and try to get to the bottom of his misfiring problem. By the time we got home, the little XR had been all but stripped down. The crankcases were still joined together, but that was about it! Les had checked everything, but the misfire persisted. We all arrived and started giving Les the benefit of our combined brains trust - about 5 brain cells each by this time! Timing, sender unit, cam timing, carburation - all had been checked out. Les was starting to give out negative vibes. (Something he had beseeched us all not to do!). He also looked like a gnarly 60 year old, rather than the sprightly young buck that we know he is! (cough). Eventually, the timing was played with a bit more and

things improved somewhat, but it was still missing. When all appeared lost, Les, out of desperation, hacked about 5mm off the ends of the HT lead, and Hey Presto! - it was cured! It was slapped back together to await Wednesdays fun.

We ate in the Hotel Picos de Europa. The food was very good, if a bit pricey. The landlord was a really pleasant guy who spoke good English. In the past, he had been an offroad 4x4 champ of the Asturias, as his many trophies and photos showed. He also showed us a scale relief map of the Picos that had been made over a period of 4 years by 1 local man. Each contour height made out of a thin layer of cork. A real work of art.

Wednesday 8th October

Today, we were out on the tracks at about 11:00. Sweaty blue cheese et-al. Great little trails were encountered and we found ourselves heading south of Potes. There was one monster downhill round a blind corner that Mike (King of the Hill, Project Leader, etc) rode down. The rest of us, having been freaked out by Pete's cautious approach, bulldogged down - if it had been later in the week, we probably would have all wizzed down it. After lunch we found ourselves way south of Potes and I had yet another slow puncture! In the front tyre this time. I was beginning to view my buddies with a certain amount of suspicion! Who was letting the pigging things down????? Hummmmm?????

At one point, we had come into a mountain village, and were unsure of the route out. Failing dismally to make our subtle questions understood by the locals, they said that a bod in the village spoke good English. Off they went to a small house and dragged out - an English guy! Not surprising that he spoke good English really. He was followed at odd intervals by 3 other Brits, each of whom got a shock when they realised we were Brits too. (They taught English to Spanish families and students. Looked like they had an idyllic lifestyle). We took their local knowledge into account and decided to head down to the road before getting back on the interesting stuff.

Later in the day, after a great blast along a really dusty trail, we popped out of a leafy lane onto a dodgy looking river crossing. Not too deep, but with some large, smooth, and very slippery rocks below the surface. Nobody made it across without getting wet feet, apart from Dunner. That was probably only because the water didn't fancy getting into his boots!! Lud's short stature nearly ensured that more than his feet got wet after he came to a stop just short of the far bank and had to put a foot down further than his inside leg measurement of about 15 inches! Without refuelling, we reckoned that we weren't going to make it home over the mountains. Pete knew of a gas station about 20 kms further south, so off we went.

Les was once again looking a bit down in the mouth. This time his bike had started vibrating badly. (It felt OK to me, but the XR600 shakes a bit even when it is well, so who am I to judge?). Anyway, the upshot is that Les decided to hack back to Potes on the road, on his own. I offered to ride shotgun for him but he reckoned he would be OK.

The rest of us decided to blast back over the mountains and so off we wobbled. Within 6 kms, Luds had binned his XR400 on an innocuous looking trail and his knee popped open like an over ripe Porkinson sausage - blood all over the place, big flap of flesh hanging down and tendons visible inside! Out came some Moist toilet tissue, a bit of J-cloth and a roll of white insulating tape (which I use as frame guards). We squidged the flesh back together as best we could and bound it up. It was obvious that we couldn't go back "over the top", so unbeknown to Les, we set off after him on the road - about 45 minutes behind.

Luds and Mike decided to sprint back to get to the local "vet" asap, and the rest of us pottered along at a more sedate 80kph. I was taking it easy to try and conserve my tyres. Dave had been in 2 minds as to whether to hang back or give chase. The "give chase" bit won in the end, and he gradually started to pull away from us. Just after we passed a village whose name escapes me, my front tyre let go big time! The bars nearly wrenched out of my hands and I was off across the other side of the road in no time. I eventually wrestled it to a halt with the pucker factor at 10 plus!! Pete who had been following, thought that I had just been stretching my legs and had caught my foot on the road! All our mates were long gone, and Dave had the only tyre levers - Sods Law.

Pete went back to the village to try to rustle up some levers while I flopped the XR on its side and yanked the wheel. The village didn't have even 1 lever, so we were contemplating using fingers and cheesy screwdrivers to attempt the job. By this time, light was becoming an increasing worry. My depression was also increasing by the minute. Thank God Dave decided to return to look for us. Out came the levers and in no time (thanks once again to Pete "Fingers" Anstey) we were on our way again. The road past Cucayo and on down the mountains to Potes is a bend swingers paradise - as long as you avoid the gravel!. Great views across the mountains and nearly collected some venison for tea too!

Pete, Dave and I, riding in a rather sensible convoy, arrived back at El Cabana at about 19:30, to find that Luds had only just come back from the local doc and needed to go to Torrelavega hospital - about a gnats away from Santander! Les was contemplating taking him in the van, but that would have taken all night.

After a shower and a bit of discussion, we decided that we would take the Audi and try to get there in reasonable time. Pete, Luds and I set off through the Deva gorge and set our sights on Torrelavega, some 80 odd miles away. We eventually arrived at the hospital around 23:00. Luds was seen almost straight away - he produced his E111 and a referral note from the local Doc and they hauled him off, poked around in the wound with NO anaesthetic, banged 7 stitches into him, X-rayed it all, and sent him on his way at about 00:30. Gratefully, we headed back towards Potes, dreaming of the 2 transport cafes we had spotted on the way to the Hospital. Naturally, they were shut by the time we got there.

Pete - alcohol radar going full speed - spotted a little bar still open as we drove

through Unquera, so we stopped and had a bit of tortilla and several coffees (paid for by the rotund one!). Pete's body was crying out for some booze, so he wriggled a few vinho tintos down while we weren't looking. On the way home, he then started squawking about wanting to get out of the car to look at the stars from the bottom of the Deva gorge - at 01:30 in the morning!. Needless to say, we told him where to go. All our mates were in bed by the time we arrived back, so gratefully, we hit the sack at around 01:40. What a pain-in-the-arse of a drive!!!!

Thursday 9th October

Luds was too sore, and in my case, I was too knackered, to ride today. The other guys went out and found some more splendid lanes. They even found another impossible uphill for Mike to vent his spleen on. Needless to say, he breezed up it with ease, while the others looked on in awe. The track had been found by Les the previous day when he was ringing his little bikes neck trying to get it to behave. It ran from the back of El Cabana up into the hills behind Turieno.

I can't comment much on the days activities, cos I wasn't there, but suffice to say that they all appeared to have had a good day. Incidentally, Les's engine vibration turned out to be a stripped rear engine mounting bolt thread. A trip to "El Cid Supremo", the local chain-saw and moped shop man (re-christened by Les), furnished a suitable bit of threaded bar and Les was off twirling the spanners again!.

Friday 10th October

was a good day for me! I didn't have a bloody puncture all day, and we did 130kms of prime Picos trails. We took in some routes across the top of the mountains starting with the superb little track in the beech woods that more or less follows the left hand side of the road from Cosgaya out to Fuente De. From there we took the Alto de la Treguera, Santa Maria de Valdeon (where we stopped in a bus shelter for lunch) and on down to the start of the Cares gorge at Cain. Even this early into the Cares, there are some dangerous drops into the ravine from the edge of the road.

After coffees, we headed back up the tarmac road and after Llanaves de la Reina, where we gassed up at a new filling station, we took the track up to the Monument del Oso - The Bear monument. The views are absolutely stunning, with mountain ranges stacked up on both sides of the ridge. Brilliant! From here, we headed back over the trails across the mountains to Cosgaya and the mad 15kms tarmac scratch back to Turieno and the El Cabana.

Saturday 11th October


Les and Pete were keen to get out for a couple of hours in the morning and returned saying that they had found the start of an interesting trail. The rest of us took time-out to do our souvenir shopping. We "moved house" from the El Cabana to the Valdecoro hotel in the morning, and made it out on to the mountains just after 12:00 noon.

Luds made it out today much to the surprise of everyone, but probably not to himself! It was decided that as his knee wound was still sore and he couldn't really

bend it very much, that we would take in some known "easy" trails. So we took in the Bear path again to ease Luds back into it. Apart from trouble starting the bike, the little turd didn't slow down hardly at all. He was hard on the gas and the brakes as usual!

We managed to take in the trail to the start of the Cares, although we turned off left before we got there, and headed up a rather suspect track that a local on a scooter assured us was a good 'un. On the way up a great little uphill trail as we were about to go through a 5 log gate, we were spoken to by one of ZZ-Top on a logging rotorvator type thingey. He just wanted us to shut the gate after we had passed through. The track ran out fairly high up into an alpine meadow with a little refugio perched on the edge of the hill. As it went nowhere, we had to go back the way we came. We passed Mr. ZZ-Top at the start of the descent, and by the time we got to the bottom, he was already there!!! We finally realised that they were identical twins with 2 of the longest beards in the whole of Northern Spain.

Between Llanaves de la Reina and the Bear Path track, Pete wanted to look at a little trail that supposedly ran from the valleys of the Senda de los Naranco/Senda de los Lechada up a valley and over the mountains to the Rio Frio. We had looked at it the previous day and Mike had gone up a little goat trail to check out if it was passable. It looked like it may be, so we decided to have another look.

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On the way, we were working our way through a herd of cows on a bit of tarmac. The first 2 bikes had weaved through all right, but as Mike burbled past, a young, frisky and not altogether small bull, with quite large pointy things sticking out of it's head, decided to give chase! Mike was blissfully unaware of the monster that was rapidly catching him up! Anyway, no contact was made. The rest of us squirted past when the beastie was looking the other way, much to the amusement of the local herdsman who were squatting on the bank at the side of the road!!

On the way down to the start of the valley, Pete said that rather than go down the road, there appeared to be "a well defined track" that looked a more interesting option. This well defined track, turned out to be a fire break, complete with what looked like tussocky Welsh style bog off to one side, and initially at least, a rather vague idea about where it was going. Just like us! So much for the "well defined track", Peter! Anyway, we all tumbled out at the bottom OK.

Off we went up the valley to the little shepherds hut that we had stopped at the day before. Some old guy was inside. He had his rucksac and a brolly hanging up outside the hut. We all flopped down and started on our usual picnic and matey eventually came out and started chattering to Pete. A bit of hand waving, broken English/Spanish and a lot of laughter later, the herdsman/shepherd was off to get his cattle back down the valley. We decided that maybe it was not a sensible option to try to get over the top on a whim so late in the day, so we headed back the way we had come.

Dave wanted to go up in the Fuente De teliferico cable car, and after a hurried descent off the mountains we made it with about 15 minutes to spare. In went Dave waving his wad, and a few minutes later he was being wafted up the bit of string that takes you up the 3000 ft cliff face. 20 minutes later, he was back down again with a grin like a Cheshire cat! We all reckoned he had a lot of bottle (or he had been at the gin again). It started to rain, so out came the PakJaks for their inaugural wearing and a test of whether they were waterproof or not. We headed off back down the track to Cosgaya that runs parallel to the road, and for the first time this holiday, Price was on the gas! The brainstorm lasted for about 15 minutes and then I came to my senses and rolled the throttle off before I rolled off the edge of some of the drops. Good fun though!! Verdict on the PakJaks - excellent Waterproof and cool, even over the regular jackets.

Sunday 12th October

Another longish half a day. Luds was able to ride once more, if a little bit stiff. We all decided to take in the route that runs from the back of Potes, winds it's way up some steep rocky hairpins with big drop-off's out to Cabanes and then picks up the track from La Hermida and then wends its way on to Beges, Sotres, - (where Pete, Dave and Luds partook of some highly questionable mid afternoon grub from a bar - goat stew with beans, very cheesy spaghetti bolognese, and mountain-man stew for the Ludlow person) - and the Llomo del Toro (Bulls Back), to the Avila refugio before dropping down to Espinama.

The track from Beges over to the Bulls Back is a cracker. Rocky, with some evil drops through the beech woods into the ravine on the right hand side some 2000 ft below, and some spectacular views across the valley to the infamous Tresviso path, which looks even more nerve wracking than described by Alan Yandell and Alan Quinney - even from a distance! Many sightings of various birds of prey, goaty things, and a couple of 4x4's with extremely nervous looking passengers inside! No bears tho. Another 100+ kms covered today. Possibly the best days ride of the entire holiday, with some great views all the way along, and from the Bulls Back into the two valleys on either side while looking down on gliding raptors!

Monday 13th October

Early start for home. Bikes were loaded Sunday night. We left the hotel at 07:15 and headed off through the Deva gorge in the dark and set our sights for Bilbao once more. Les's poor old overloaded van's headlights dazzled me in the rear view mirror all the way through the gorge. We also hit a rock fall half way through, which I thought was a brown paper bag for some reason! What a prat!

We arrived at Bilbao in plenty of time and said our goodbyes to Pete and Dave, who were due to catch the 20:00 flight back to Heathrow. The Pride of Bilbao had to contend with a force 8 gale most of the way across the Bay of Biscay, which didn't even make the ship roll even if we did get the odd thump through the bows, but it did make us 1 hour late arriving at Portsmouth. After dropping Mike off at Horton Heath, we made our way steadily back to Devizes and arrived at about 21:00.

Les still had to drop Luds and Pete Anstey's bikes and bits off, so God knows what time he got home. But full marks to the old bugger for never-say-die persistence!

I would just like to say a big " Thank You" to all the guys on the trip. Nobody fell out with anybody (which was eth,eth, eth, surprising). We had some good laughs; and we rode some great trails and took in some brilliant scenery along the way. To top it all, everyone we met along the way, locals and visitors were friendly. Makes a change from Ramblers on Exmoor in the tourist season doesn't it!!

Now we all intend to do it at the same time again next year. There are still loads of trails to do in the west and south of the region. We can hardly wait!

Ride safely .Rowde Rooster....(Vic Price)

CONGRATULATIONS!

to Tony Steel from Bath
winner of the 1998 Calendar Photo Competition

LETTERS

ANYONE WISH TO JOIN US?

Hi Trail Riders, I am a new member of the TRF, although a somewhat older hand to trail riding, I am returning to the hobby after a few years absence.

A couple of friends and myself would be very pleased to hear from anyone wishing to join us on a few days out trailing. I live near Dumfries in South West Scotland but would like to hear from anyone intending to go riding in Southern Scotland or Cumbria. I would be especially keen to hear from anyone with knowledge of the green lanes in the Lake District or of any legal rights of way such as abandoned council owned roads or old drove roads in Scotland.

Scottish readers will be well aware of the legal problems with our trespass laws, so advice on this subject is especially welcome.

It is also my intention to spend a few days camping in the West Highlands during 1998. Exploring on and off road during the day and sampling the hospitality of the local hostleries during the evening. So far the interested parties are Tooly aboard his SP400, Neil on a DT175 and myself on my XT350. Anyone who would like to join in such a trip would be more than welcome to come along. The expedition may suffer from organisation of the spontaneous variety, but I'm sure a good time will be had by all. This is a particularly beautiful part of the world and well worth a visit. Again I would be glad of any advice from anyone with local knowledge.

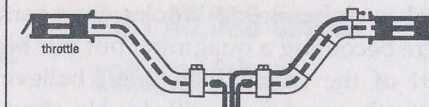
So, if you would like some company for a few days out or could supply information to some like minded enthusiasts, please phone me on 01576 470388 and I would be most grateful.
Jack Cook, Lockerbie

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To the best of my knowledge, most established motorcycle dealers offer a discount to bike clubs (TRF, MAG, BMF, etc.) so it was surprising to me when recently two people (who later turned out to be TRF members) each purchased a substantial quantity of Yamaha parts in my Parts Dept. and didn't show their Club cards or ask for their 10%!

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CUMBRIA TRF BIG TRAILIE RUN

The weekend of September 6th saw the fruition of an idea I have cherished for some time, an outing aimed at big trail bikes. As an expatriot Northumbrian, where better to go than Northumberland? So it was that Paul Cornthwaite and his wife rode two up on a DR800 "Dr. Big" and Paul Carr, an expatriot Geordie and his wife rode two up on a Dominator as well as me on a DR650. Roger Harris was to come as well but had hurt his back only two days before. Adrian Brown from Rookhope in Co. Durham brought his car to act as back up carrying all our luggage thus making the ride that much easier.

Leaving Kendal we bimbled along avoiding main roads as much as possible to the first trail, the Old Scotch Road then on to Tebay crossing the A66 at Temple Sowerby. The red mud of the lanes west of Hartside soon got the bikes looking dirty which helped to raise/lower the tone of the place parked among the Fireblades et al at the Hartside Cafe.

Northwards now in deteriorating weather. Penetrating damp and drizzle accompanied us along the long Bank (featured in TRAIL 227). There is a waterlogged deep rutted section at (86) 755526, you couldn't see my bike for steam!

Westwards along the straight easy lanes between the A69 and the B6318 towards Haltwhistle is just made for big trailies.

After Otterburn the drizzle gave way to continuous rain. I asked Paul (Dommie) how it felt to be back in the homeland, "Wet" was the short reply. The final twelve miles to Wooler gave continuous trailing. Usually sandy, these trails were becoming a quagmire, but our big machines proved equal to the task. In this part of the world they don't believe in putting bridges over a river when a perfectly good ford will do. No shortage of fords here. That evening at Wooler Youth Hostel we were joined by Gary Bussey who came up from Ashington with his CRM.

Next morning, sunshine and the promise of a dry day. Donning our still wet kit (euch!!) we set off for Yetholm. Clennel Street and The Street; good long trails, twelve miles or so each. At Uswayford we all had a try on Gary's CRM, we all want one now. These Cheviot trails are not too difficult but there are one or two nadgery bits exacerbated by the previous day's rain, but Gary skillfully guided and shepherded our lumbering giants through.

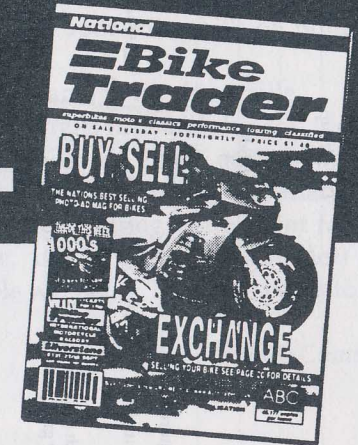
At Hownam Gary needed petrol and the nearest place was Jedburgh (Yes, we forgot about Oxnam!). Dere Street starts at Jedburgh so, why not? All went well until the stretch between the ford at Cringle Bank and Shotheids. There was mud - buckets of it. Even the CRM got stuck. But Paul's Dommie sailed through it all. A lot of time had been lost wallowing around here and we had to meet up with Adrian at Byrness so abandoned Dere Street for another time. We'll be back!

At Byrness we sat in the warm sun of late afternoon retelling our tales of the day. Reclaiming our luggage we thanked Adrian for his help, opening gates at the

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start and finish of trails, waiting for us at various venues and lightening our load. He then set off back to Rookhope and Gary headed back to Ashington. We took to the Kielder Forest Trail and on to Bewcastle and the Lime Kiln Inn. The more elderly locals talked with us of their days when they rode these hills on Bultacos and DOT Springers.

Carlisle, the M6 and a blast home, one real advantage of a big trailie.

Usually I have found the north Northumbrian trails firm and dry and ideally suited to large machinery but recent rains had made the going quite boggy in places. All three bikes coped fairly well, plain brute force I guess. My thanks to Adrian for providing the back-up and at times really putting himself out for us. Thanks also to Gary for his help and guidance, and to Trevor (Nightrider) for marking up our maps. It all made for an enjoyable weekend. There are plans to do it again next year...

Norman Trewwhitt, Cumbria

ILLEGAL TRAIL RIDING ON THE CHEVIOTS

For some time now we, the Northumberland TRF have been aware of complaints directed against motorcyclists, the illegal ones using the Alwinton area of Northumberland border Cheviot hills.

This problem is worsened at lambing time when these illegal rogue riders, using unregistered machines have been seen open fell racing with total disregard for private land, people or livestock. Occasionally, local group members have crossed the trails of these riders and attempted to coerce them (without any success) into legality or membership of the TRF.

To make matters worse, the Army is about to extend its ranges and introduce new big super guns. Public Enquiry protesters, National Park Wardens, cyclists, ramblers, farmers, are all looking for ways to dissipate the heat, so, yes - you've guessed it - why not strike at trail riders.

The latest allegation is (and there is no proof) that visiting groups are largely responsible.

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C20	(18" version of above)	120/90 - 18	£34.50
ED91	(serious Enduro tyre)	120/90 - 18	£37.50
C14	(hard wearing off-road tyre)	4.00/4.25-18	£31.00
S27	(good all-round front tyre)	3.00 - 21	£26.00
TR1	(Trials type rear tyre)	4.00 - 18	£32.00
TR1	(Trials front tyre)	3.00 - 21	£28.00
Pirelli MT17 Trail Tyres			
MT17	(knobbly and road legal)	110/90-18	£34.50
MT17	(17" fitment in 2 sizes)	120/90-17 & 130/80-17	£34.50
Bridgestone Enduro/Trail Tyres			
ED02	(road legal Enduro tyre)	4.60 - 17	£39.00
ED03	(road legal front Enduro tyre)	3.00 - 21	£34.50
ED04	(excellent for 125/200cc bikes)	4.10 - 18	£38.50
* Continental TKC 90 (serious front tyre) 3.00 - 21 £29.75 *			

IRC Vulcanduro Off-road/Trail Tyres

sorry out of stock until next shipment arrives probably september!
Trail & Enduro Bike 'O' Ring Chain/Sprocket Kits
All kits supplied with Quality 520 'O' ring chain cut to correct length Hard wearing Steel Front and REAR sprockets. - £59.95
All prices include VAT

Carriage Charges		Next Day	3 Day
Two delivery options, either	1 tyre	£6.50	£5.25
Next Day for urgent deliveries	2 tyres	£6.25	£4.75
Three Day delivery as a cheaper alternative.	3 tyres	£6.00	£4.25
	4 or more	£5.00	FREE
Chain and Sprocket Kits - Next day delivery		£4.95	
EAST MIDLANDS TRF GROUP MEMBER			

Please phone for more detail or copy of my Free illustrated price list

Telephone : **01949 850530** (anytime)

For over a year now our Group has avoided using the Alwinton departure point, yet complaints have continued to increase to the extent that Police and residents are now vigilantly recording bike registration numbers and those of the transporting vehicles.

Accordingly, we in Northumberland appeal to all who visit the area to do what we do and use alternative departure points. National Parks have suggested complete voluntary restraint, but we all know that only limits the lawful for the benefit and acceptance of the villains.

In closing, we appeal to all visitors to respect and preserve our Rights to use what must be one of the most dramatically beautiful parts of the British Isles, where ancient trails wander for hundreds of miles.

Do what we do, avoid using the Alwinton and surrounding car parks. Record and report suspect (untaxed) machines and accompanying vehicles.

Northumberland TRF

WELL HARD PEAK GROUP!

Richard May of the Suffolk Group said that he had never known a TRF rider hardy enough to spend a night under canvas then ride. Well we in the Peak Group must be well hard because we had a Camping Weekend in October and there were 8 under canvas, 4 in vans then 5 turned up

Group who are hard enough to come camping then ride please ring us and we will oblige: we recommend the Quiet Woman Public House at Earl Sterndale near Buxton. Many thanks to everybody who turned up.

Tony Quinn

THANKS TO JEFF WARD

Further to Jeff Ward's investigation of funds in 1995 and 1996 and recovery of £15,600, may I thank Jeff on behalf of our group.

The work involved and the tenacity of Jeff have been exemplary in this difficult investigation.

Can we also extend our thanks to Yorkshire Bank, The Halifax Building Society and Tony Stuart.

Chris Robinson, Hampshire Group

CLASSIFIED

YAMAHA XT350 1996 "P" reg. Very little off road use. £2150 o.v.n.o. Tel: 01748 812282.

XR200R 1982, long tax, MOT, tidy for year, £750. **CB250 SUPERDREAM** 1981, tax, MOT, low mileage, genuine tidy bike, £595. Tel: 01983 867730 I.O.W.

YAMAHA XT350 "G" reg. Late '89. Unused for four years, only 3000 miles. Exceptional, almost totally original condition. Only £1650 ono. Tel: Phil 01332 344495 (Derby).

SUZUKI RMX250 1994 "L" reg. Tax, MOT, £1850. **YAMAHA DT125R** black, Feb '97, "P" reg, 1000 miles, like new, £1750. Tel: 01476 402447 Grantham, Lincs.

WANTED XL185 or similar. **WANTED** parts for Tenere 1987 XTZ600 - pannier boxes and frame, front rack, S.S. Lazer exhaust (complete), engine crashbars, spare front wheel, X-ring chain and sprockets, kickstart. Tel: 01229 717301 or Answerphone: 01565 722692 or Fax: 01565 723891.

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 and grub handy. Tel: 01539 445638.

KAWASAKI KLX250/300 1995 "M" reg, fitted big boar kit, excellent condition, must be seen. Tel: 01845 537465 day or 597451 eve. **XR250** rack, £20. Also front exhaust pipe, £20. Tel: 01249 658692 (Wilts.).

KTM620 EGS "N" reg, 1996 model, tax, very good condition, Datatagged, low mileage,

lots of extras, £3700. Tel: Daytime 01522 583341, evenings 01522 868843 Lincoln.

YAMAHA TT350 enduro. Fully road legal. "R" reg, very low mileage, as new condition. £3250 ono. Tel: 01305 265259 (Dorset).

MOTO GUZZI 750 STRADA 1996, 6300 miles, red, fitted with handlebar heaters but otherwise standard and immaculate. £3250. May take mint XT600E or Serow in p/x. Tel: 01772 792231 (Preston, Lancs.).

WANTED Road legal trail bike, 4-stroke up to 350cc. Good condition up to £500. Phone Phil on 01491 574458 or 0410 132740 **KTM400SC '96 "N"** reg, superb condition throughout, trail ridden only. Must phone for more info. £3950. Tel: Philip 0191 4564696 or 0370 416123.

CHRISTMAS GOODIES Stocking fillers to huge presents: MSR Lite-Ning Pro jeans - a few blue pairs still available @ £145.95. Pro Racing ISDE Jacket £169.95. (All sizes in blue/purple/red). Front Fender bag from £19.95; Map Cases from £14.95; Handguards from £29.95; Heated grip inserts (like a car heated window) £24.95. Maier Plastics & Pro Racing - full ranges available. Best prices for accessories and clothing imported direct from the USA, we will try to special order ANYTHING you can't find. Phone OwenSport for a free catalogue and price list on 01670 852384 (evenings). Order early in December to ensure Christmas delivery.

Sprockets & Chains

Renthal steel front and alloy rear sprockets - J.T and Chiaravalli steel sprockets - DID, RK and Regina chains (standard, heavy duty and O ring) - special rear sprocket manufacturing - 520 conversions.

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