

GROUPS

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

BRISTOL Martin Harding, Tel: 01179 696674
4th Mon, Keynsham Rugby Club, Bristol Road, Keynsham

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 Tony Stuart, Tel: 01208 862960
3rd Tuesday, The Ship, Wadebridge

CUMBRIA Richard Smith, Tel: 015394 33470
2nd Tuesday, Derby Arms Hotel, Witherslack, Nr. Kendal

DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE
Kevin Marsh, Tel: 01246 237910
2 & 4 Tuesdays, The Angel Hotel, Sprinkhill, Eckington, Nr.
Chesterfield, Derbyshire

DEVON Richard Arscott, Tel: 01803 612950
2nd Tue, The Welcome Stranger, Bickington, Nr. Newton
Abbott

DORSET Paul Jackson, Tel: 01305 772208
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/Fax: 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.

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
1st Thur, The Royal British Legion, Pyle St., Newport, IOW

KENT Gary Westbrook, Tel: 01843 590184
2nd Wed, Pied Bull, Farningham, Off A20, 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 Kevin Lindsay, Tel: 01993 841543
3rd Thurs, Duke of Marlborough, 1.5 miles N. of Woodstock

PEAK DISTRICT GROUP
Simon Mason, Tel: 01773 713188
1st Thursday, 8pm, Travellers Rest, Ashbourne Road, Derby

RIBBLE VALLEY Peter Higham, Tel: 01200 424947
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 472343
Last Thur, Ring for Details

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

SOUTH WEST WALES
Mark Rowntree, Tel: 01792 844316
1st Wed, Lodge Gorseinon, 7.30pm

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
David Crone, Tel: 01325 258252
1st & 3rd Wed, 8.30p.m., 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,
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TRAIL

MAY, 1998

No. 237

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

EDITOR: Fred Ellison.



Southern Group contemplate the end of the road at Trebarwith Strand, Cornwall. "Next Stop America".

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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.

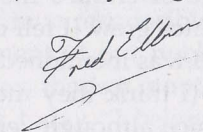
E D I T O R

We now have proof that our bulletin attracts an avid readership which extends well beyond the trail riders who feel strongly enough about their chosen pastime to support the Trail Riders Fellowship - by being a member or even getting involved enough to want to do Rights of Way work, help organise a group or to help in lots of other equally important ways.

The proof is in the form of a 4-page reply to Neville, Thomas and Holland (see last month's bulletin) from Andy Dunlop of GLEAM. While much of what he says would appear to be reasonable, I did promise him, if we were to print any or all of it, that it would be kept in context. Unfortunately this is not possible due to much of the content having an overall bias which flies in the face of many of our basic principals. However if anybody would like a closer look at Mr. Dunlop's viewpoint please send an SAE and I will forward a copy. Or if you wish to join GLEAM he assures me that they you would be more than welcome, unless your name happens to be Mark Holland(!).

I would like to draw the attention of the 'on foot brigade' to an item on page 21. If only TRAIL riding could get the kind of support enjoyed by ramblers. Despite all their little feet wearing away a hill - just less than a mountain - the taxpayer is having to maintain it at a cost of £90,000 per mile.

Enough of that - it's all getting far too serious, time to maintain the bike and get some trail riding done as that's why I joined the TRF (I nearly forgot).



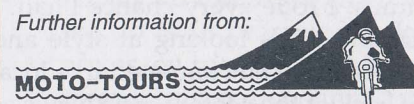
P.S. Where are all those interesting articles?

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THE SECRETARY

I feel I am beginning to find my feet in respect to the position I've taken on and would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to everyone and try to give some impression of who I am and what I'm about.

Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin.

Born into a small mining community in a South Wales valley the eldest of three children (all of whom ride motorcycles of some description), I was christened Jonathan David St. John (there's a Dai' in every Welshman). My father, the aspiring Chief Fire Officer, in his quest for promotion moved us all over the country. Something I must say I rather enjoyed as I have lived in some beautiful places. Worcestershire, Buckinghamshire and Carmarthenshire, to name a few. Now married and settled with two girls aged 5 and 13 and a Great Dane puppy aged 10 months we all live on the South Wales Coast in the City and County of Swansea. Having followed in my father's footsteps I too am serving in the Fire Service and have done for thirteen years.

I have been riding motorcycles from the legal age and have owned a number of bikes from a Honda CB100N to a Kawasaki GPZ 900R (oh yes! I once owned a Kawasaki 550 ridged rear end chopper, that was more fun that it is probably legal to have, but that's another story) but with middle age (I was nearly 28) creeping up on me, and the desire to keep my license intact, and in the pursuit of urban respectability, (isn't it amazing what you can talk yourself into) I sold my bike.

Several Sierras and a couple of French Country Camping holidays later with the temptation to buy another bike growing more powerful with each passing year, I found I could no longer resist. I bought a Suzuki DR200 and went in search of someone to teach me to ride off road in the belief that this would be cheaper, less hazardous and more fun (one out of three isn't bad). Now, motocross looked far too dangerous, and enduro was far too expensive (though if some benevolent soul would care to sponsor me for a season? No? I didn't think so!). Trail riding looked to be the one. So with some new friends, contacted through the TRF, I went to County Hall and marked up my maps and with an insatiable appetite to learn, I rode trails. I rode every chance I had. I watched video footage of enduro motocross and trials looking at style and technique. My confidence grew (I fell off a lot less). I even competed in a local Hare and Hounds (and was mentioned in the back of the Motor Cycle News as "The Spirit of Event" (I think they mean I was rubbish) and progressed to a Husqvarna WR125 which although very nice was a bit too 'single purpose' for me.

I now ride a Kawasaki KLX650 and although she's a big lump I find I'm really enjoying my trail riding. I can use the bike back and for to work, take my

wife for a run down the beach on a sunny summer's evening or go out and cover 80 miles of trail on Sunday with 'the boys'.

Even my wife is getting in on the act now as she comes out on her Yamaha DT125 and is improving with every trip.

So to the TRF, the National Executive Committee and the National Secretary post.

I thought long and hard before offering my services, taking time to speak to the Chairman and the out going Secretary before finally deciding to 'give it a go'. I went to the first Exec. Meeting of '98, offered my services and as unopposed got the job, or so it was recorded in the minutes. It dawned on me quite early that what I'd taken on was not a 'position' but a title, with little or no written guidance and nothing in the way of a structure to work from. I don't think this is how I'd like to pass the job onto the next victim. Sorry, volunteer.

This brings me nicely to my next point. What I perceive to be my role as the National Secretary.

- I feel it is the responsibility of the Secretary to put into place the mechanism of a structured meeting. To include the compilation, formation and distribution of Agenda and Minutes.
- To assist in the running of a productive meeting.
- To support the Chairman.

All of which are carried out through full consultation with the Exec. Committee and the final approval of the Chairman.

Here are a couple of ideas:

- I'd like to see some form of 'Job Description' formulated for all the Executive Officers' posts, as I believe this will help to ensure continuity and if a position is clearly defined there is less room for misunderstanding.
- I'd also like to see a form of 'Standing Orders' introduced as an aid memoir detailing accepted procedure within the TRF administrative machine, a copy of which could be kept by each Group Sec. One of the benefits of this would be to help save valuable time at Executive Committee Meetings as everyone would be aware of procedures and accepted perimeters within a meeting.
- Finally I'd like to see an understanding among all the members that what we do is to promote the legitimate use of green lanes with vehicular access, on road legal motor cycles, in a responsible manner, with the aim of ensuring our continued enjoyment of our hobby in our lifetime, and hopefully that of our children's (boy, that's a mouthful!) and that's it.

As I just heard Tony Blair saying today "I believe in live and let live" (somehow I think he's going to regret that one). So let's all unite under the TRF banner and Fight the Good Fight; Stokers and Thumpers, Open face and Full face, Barber and Wulf, Trelliborg and Trials, all together, one voice, together we

stand, etc. All for One, etc., etc., etc.

Sorry I got a bit carried away then (there must be a little Trade Unionist in me) but you know what I mean.

However I'm no fool and I realise we are all volunteers, so to see just one of these things come to fruition would be great.

Anyway that's about it. If you're anything like I am, it's about time you got out of the bathroom and let someone else have a go.

If you have any (constructive) views on what you've read please let me know.

Oh and I nearly forgot - **GET OUT AND RIDE YOUR BIKE.**

This has been Jonathan St. John (probably soon to be Ex. Acting National Secretary) baring his soul for the TRF.



Jonathan on his KLX650 and Wife Karen on her DT125R at Sarn Helen

Jonathan on his KLX650 at Sarn Helen



NOTICE BOARD

Change of Details

Please note the new details of our Secretary and RoW Officer - please refer to inside front cover

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Admission £6 (BMF Members £5).

BMF overnight camping and entertainment on the 13th,

£10 weekend ticket.

THE 2ND EXEC MEETING 25TH APRIL 1998

NOT THE MINUTES

The meeting decided that the minutes appearing in TRAIL were difficult to read in the format in which they were appearing and that a full copy of the minutes was taking up too much space, so resolved to have an abridged version printed in TRAIL. A full copy will be sent to each Group Sec. and copies are available to all members, from the National Secretary on receipt of a SAE.

ABRIDGED TOO FAR

Following the instruction of the previous meeting, the day was to be split into two parts. The morning being an open meeting, the afternoon being set aside to look at 'The Forward Plan'. Although this placed tremendous time pressure on the morning session most items were dealt with and those that were not will be on the agenda for the next meeting. I hope I do everyone justice here.

The meeting was attended by 34 persons, all TRF Executive or Group Reps. Apologies: Jeff Ward.

With slight alterations the minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

MATTERS ARISING

Peter Banks reported that the Endurance Horse Society donated £260 to the Norton Malreward Fund.

Photo Day Tim Stevens asked if anyone had run a photo day. The response was positive. *If you haven't had one yet, why not?*

Direct Debit The Treasurer was not convinced that membership payment by direct debit was a good idea as it could result in a drop in donations received.

Agenda The Chairman asked that items for the agenda be sent to the Secretary one month before the meeting (more of this in my 'Secretary's Remarks').

Planning Inspectorate Richard Marshall has had a response from the Planning Inspectorate to this enquiry about their quality methods. It did not address the issue and took a year to come. Richard is continuing to pursue this.

Web Site Mark Holland asked if the TRF Web Site needed updating and making more 'user friendly'. Steve Neville is looking into it.

Bad Press Peter Banks referred to the comments printed in TRAIL that were not accurate and of a derogatory nature. Noting that this can not be in the best interest of the TRF. The Chairman referred him to the minutes of the previous meeting.

Officers Reports Are taken as read and are available from your Regional

Secretary.

Chairmans Closing Remarks Any items not heard today will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Tim Stevens asked what those items were and if the meeting were to be allowed to know or were there 'secret' agenda items as this was not the way the TRF operated. The Secretary explained that there were no 'secret' items and listed the only items that had been forwarded to him before the meeting. Namely:

- The request for the acceptance of a new group (The Axe Vale) by the TRF Executive.
- A request for information about the Bursary fund.*
- An enquiry about LARA and how much affiliation costs.*
- An enquiry about the BMF and how much affiliation costs.*
- An enquiry about individual officers expenses.*

* - are available from the Treasurer without going through the Executive Committee. David Clegg, who had wanted to raise the issues was happy to leave them for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 1.15p.m. (only 15 minutes late).

The Forward Plan As already indicated the forward plan took up the afternoon. It was run in the form of a S.W.O.T. analysis, and I leave the report on this to David Giles who ran the afternoon and who I am sure would do a better job than me.

National Secretary

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ROW NEWS

RoW OFFICER'S REPORT

This month a brief report and (almost) no mention of the "N.M." word, save that I now have many of the pledges in, but still have a few dozen outstanding. I still need someone to work on the database and send out thank you letters to everyone who has contributed and/or returned pledges. This amounts to about 300 responses!!! Any volunteers?

One of the great things about holding a National Officers post is that, when one gets to ride in an area away from the regular haunts, there is no shortage of guides. I was fortunate in having the privilege of several Cumbria Group members show myself and friends from the Kent Group around the Lakes at the end of April.

After all these years it was good to be able to ride those lanes that one has heard and read of; Garburn Road, Gatescarth Pass, (which should be marked as a Byway, but isn't), the Old Coach Road and many others. The sheer spectacle, perspective and beauty of the Lakes as seen from the saddle of a motorcycle is possibly one of the ultimate ways of seeing and feeling the Countryside. I had problems in trying not to join the scenery whilst admiring it. Some people get their religious experiences from mumbling pious prose in cold buildings; my spiritual inspiration comes in a different way.....

To me the thought of walking these routes and spending most of ones time looking at ones boots, trudging up a hill is anathema. Possibly next time I'll take a mountain bike as well; maybe only a slightly less brilliant way of experiencing the Lakes.

Many thanks; it's what the "F" in Fellowship is all about.

Steve Neville

EXTRACTS FROM LARA NEWS

THE LAW MEANS EXACTLY WHAT I SAY, SAYS JUDGE

After two days of legal argument in the Royal Courts of Justice (R v SoS ex parte Stevens), the judge decided not to quash a 'Bridleway' decision on a RuPP in Norton Malreward, near Bristol. The judge was critical of the Inspector's report and of the DoE advice on which it was based. Although the DoE advice 'went too far', this particular case was not invalidated by that over statement, he said.

Contrary to what has been reported in 'The Times' and in better papers, the judge did not 'bar off-road drivers from green lanes'. What he did do was make it

more difficult to record RuPPs as BOATs now that the witnesses of earlier use have passed on. If the evidence was only of motoring use, this would have to have started before 1930, said the judge. Of course, this use would also need to have been recorded at the time, and the records preserved, so that it could be produced as evidence seventy years later.

Another Times error was the report that the case was brought by LARA. Tim Stevens, who did bring the case in person, said "The idea that motorists aged 90 and 100 should pop round to give clear and cogent evidence to Inspectors about their memories of using roads before 1930 makes the judge's so-called 'common sense' version of the law rather difficult to swallow. Put this decision alongside the Nettlecombe case, though, and there is clearly something rather odd going on - one judge takes a definition literally and we cannot have a Byway, the next judge ignores the literal definition and we cannot have a byway. One judge ignores an illegality and the landowner benefits, and the other judge says that illegalities cannot benefit the public. No wonder some people say that the law is an ass".

Tim is currently considering whether, even with further generous support, he can afford to risk an appeal.

THE LAW MEANS EXACTLY WHAT IT SAYS, SAYS JUDGE

In a recent case from Wiltshire (R v Wilts CC ex parte Nettlecombe Ltd.), users were disappointed when a route with good vehicular evidence did not find its way onto the Definitive Map as a Byway. On the ground the route was totally obstructed. The court was reminded that the definition of Byway included the words 'is used by the public', and as this route was not used by anyone, it could not meet the definition. The judge agreed, and quashed the inspector's decision.

A TRF spokesman said 'If users break the law, it does not count as evidence, but here a road is obstructed - breaking the law - and the landowner wins again. The answer must be that we make sure that all routes are used before anyone claims. Even if it means clambering over bags of silage and hacking through garden sheds, which is surely not sensible. But we know that we must never 'back off, however helpful that might seem - no use is no use".

'VEHICLES ON BYWAYS' WILL NOT BE BANNED

Two years ago the DoE and DoT carried out a consultation with this title about proposals to change the law. The announcement by Michael Meacher on February 5th included encouragement of Codes of Conduct, and details of a guide to good practice for Highway Authorities, called 'Making the Best of Byways'. This contains advice on all aspects of managing green roads for recreation, from the construction of 'French Drains' and 'Irish Bridges' to the shared responsibility for management epitomised by the LARA system of Voluntary Restraint, and the Hierarchy of Trail Routes initiative. Copies of the DETR guidance are available free of charge and post free by ringing 0117 987 8879.

One factor which convinced the minister that he should not impose a ban was the ongoing Rapid Response scheme operated jointly by LARA and the Country Landowners Association. In this, as Mr. Meacher says, 'very few incidents have been reported, further supporting the view that problems are localised'. The contact number for the LARA-CLA Rapid Response scheme is 0171 235 0511.

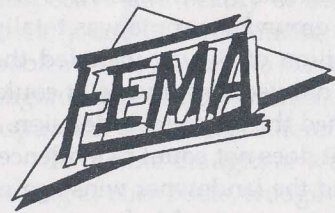
Information on LARA Members, Codes of Conduct, the Hierarchy of Trail Routes Report and advice on the LARA Voluntary Restraint system is available from LARA HQ 01630 657627.

OBSTRUCTION OF THE HIGHWAY IS NOT A CRIME, SAY POLICE

Recent correspondence received by LARA members from Police Authorities is contradictory. Avon & Somerset Constabulary say 'The legal advice we have received is that the BOAT and the unclassified county roads at either end are public vehicular highways and therefore are highways within the meaning of the Highways Act 1980. Section 137 of that Act makes it an offence to wilfully obstruct the highway'.

The Traffic Department at Greater Manchester, however, take a different view; 'Obstruction of the highway is not a crime'.

Perhaps this confusing situation explains the reluctance of some Police officers even to record reports of blocked lanes.



ROAD BANS

It is unfair that some roads are closed to motorcyclists but open to car drivers. In 1990 there were 70 bans in one country. Now there are 200 bans in three countries. This limitation of our freedom of movement, which unfairly penalises all motorcyclists for the actions of a few, is not acceptable. We demand an end to road bans in Germany, Austria and Holland. We call on the authorities to deal with noise and accidents in a more acceptable way in consultation with motorcyclists' representatives.

RECOGNITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Motorcycles have failed to achieve their full potential in today's congested traffic because administrations have ignored or overlooked their environmental benefits. Failure to understand motorcycles have resulted in them being included in car recycling legislation (End of Life Vehicles Directive) which could be counter productive by preventing users from dismantling and rebuilding their own machines.

Therefore we demand a full scientific environmental appraisal of motorcycles compared to cars. This should include: energy and materials used in production, use of land (roads, car parks), congestion and recycling.

EFFECTIVE SAFETY MEASURES

Road repairs by use of bitumen kills motorcyclists. We protest against the use of this lethal substance which turns roads into ice rinks even during Summer sunshine. We demand investigation and use of new substances which do not cause accidents.

Motorcyclists are killed by current designs of crash barriers (1% of all road deaths in France). The sharp edges of upright supports of barriers amputate arms and legs in collisions. We demand protective coverings or new less dangerous designs.

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LAST OF THE SUMMER WINE 3

SOUTHERN GROUP WRINKLIES GO TO CORNWALL

It all started a couple of months ago with a phone call to Sally Madgwick, Secretary of the Cornwall Group and a discussion with "Curly" who assured me that Cornwall could provide two full days of riding.

The outcome was that on Saturday, 21st March, 7 Southern Group members made their way to the Masons Arms at Camelford to arrive in the midst of a "funeral wake" at about 4.30 in the afternoon. (The Cornish certainly know how to see their dead off). Sally and Curly came over in the evening to find us well fed and settled into comfortable accommodation.

Our routes for the two days were in the hands of Tony Stuart, our National Chairman, who arrived at 9.30 for a 10.00 start. On this our first day we were joined by four more Cornwall members as we headed off along the North Cornwall coastline skirting Boscastle and Tintagel to just south of Bude. From here on, as we turned southward, following Tony through numerous lefts and rights, the route was less clear, particularly as place names so often began with Tre or Pen. Perhaps we were going round in circles, but as the sun remained well hidden, there was nothing to give us a clue.

The number of unsurfaced lanes for the first morning was not great, but this was compensated for by the coastal scenery, the profusion of daffodils and primroses in the hedgerows and the numerous Buzzards which observe one from their perches on fence and electricity poles. After a lunch stop taken sat under a hedge we moved on and the frequency of lanes and their challenge stepped up a gear or two. Late afternoon we were treated to a foretaste of the next day by riding down a lane known to the Cornwall Group as Pink Panther. After a serious inspection and the odd bit of practice we made our way to the final challenge of the day, a short lane known as Sallies Hill, which was taken in our stride much to the surprise of the Cornish onlookers.

Monday also started at 10 and with a few patches of sun breaking through we headed southwards. Tony again threaded us through the maze of tarmac lanes, between the unsurfaced lanes and as promised brought us to the foot of Pink Panther by mid morning. This was accomplished in a tidy fashion by most, but with the odd foot waving performance. We continued working our way southward and were now near the south coast with signposts reading "Looe 2 miles".

Whilst in this area we were treated to a climb called Muchlamick, claimed by the locals to be near impossible. When we got to the top, albeit rather warm and not totally without assistance, our leader was beginning to despair at being unable

to defeat us. At this point Tony decided his only tactic was to take us to a lane alongside a Carp fishing lake which boasted a notorious mud hole. Now mud to Hampshire Hogs is like a red rag to a bull and three of us had a go. The first two succeeded with some assistance, but had cleared a line for the third who managed a feet up performance but was reluctant to claim a clean as the mud dripped off. The remainder preferred to keep themselves and bikes clean.

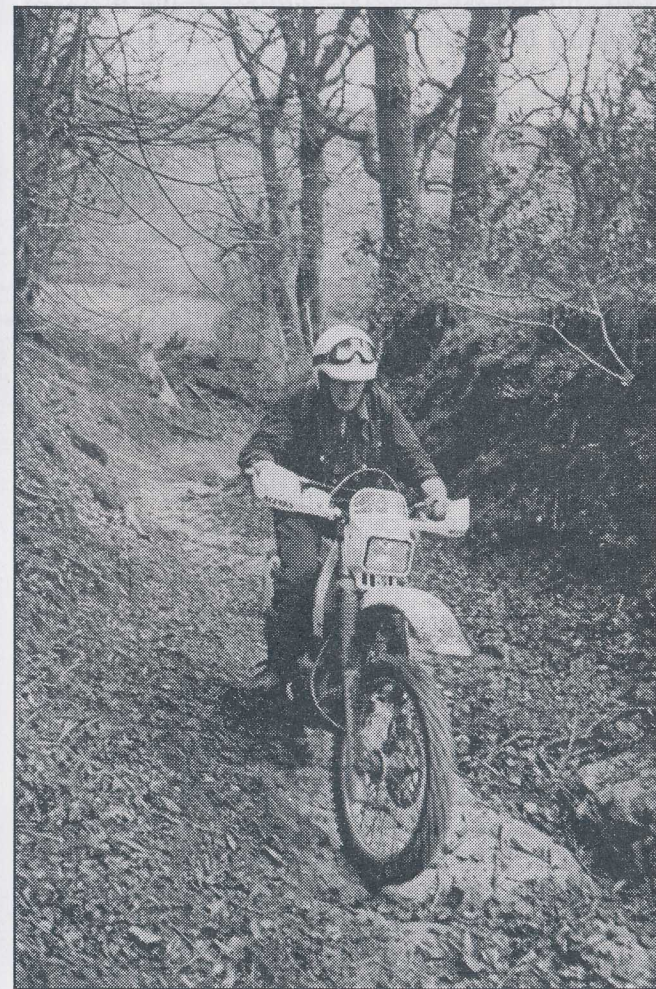
We were now starting to work northwards and with time running out, completed the final 15 miles on the road to finish a very full day at about 7.30 with our lights on.

To sum up, a very enjoyable trip with a mix of social activity and riding. We enjoyed the company of Sally and Curly on our first evening and Tony joined us

for dinner on Monday evening. Couple this to well planned routes ably led, with a good mix of lanes in daily mileages of 100 and 110, comfortable accommodation with excellent food, two days of dry but cool weather and trouble free bikes, except for one silencer which fell off, one could not ask for more.

Thank you again
Cornwall Group.

*Mike May,
Southern Group*



letters

OUR GOAL: MAINTAIN AND EXTEND

This is the T.R.F.'s goal for the future.

The S.W.O.T. Analysis, ably conducted by Dave Giles at the last Executive Meeting, came up with this statement of intent

Companies have to grow, otherwise they go into decline and lose market share. The same must apply to the T.R.F., which has to grow organically. It cannot grow by acquisition, but it can grow in another important way - by knowledge or "intellectual capital" as the buzz-word has it nowadays.

We need to maintain and extend our vehicular green lane network against strong opposition. This means that when one lane is lost, another one or two have to be claimed.

Training was emphasised. Training gives knowledge. Knowledge gives power and confidence which should slowly lead to more green lanes on the map.

Let's hope we'll have the stamina to maintain and extend our will to succeed. It won't be easy.

Gwyn Thomas

PLEASANT DEALINGS

I am writing to inform other trail riders of my pleasant dealings with the T.R.F.

I joined the T.R.F. after seeing the display at the Dirt Bike Show at Donnington Park in December. I have attended a couple of meetings of my local group and met like-minded people with whom I have enjoyed riding my local trails.

In February of this year my wife and I decided that in late March we would spend a week at my parents caravan in South Wales. I thought that it would be a good opportunity to take our two trail bikes and explore new lanes.

I contacted the local rep. for South Wales, who advised me to contact Jonathan St. John, who was a member of a new group of trail riders in South West Wales. I telephoned Jonathan and discovered that he is the new National Secretary of the T.R.F. Jonathan suggested that instead of arranging marked up maps, both he and his wife Karen should take us on a guided tour.

So March arrived and off we went to South Wales and met up with the two of them for an excellent days riding from Swansea to near Brecon via Sarn Helen. The purpose of this letter is to thank Jonathan and Karen for their warm

hospitality and to say, whilst people like this are involved with the T.R.F., the club can only improve.

Neil Fairbrother

NEW MEMBER

I have recently become a member of the T.R.F., having found the details in a copy of "BIKE" magazine and have just received the February, 1998 copy of TRAIL, which I found interesting.

At the start of last month (April), I bought my first bike - a Suzuki DR350 and within a week both it and me travelled to France to work on a farm until the end of June. The farm is situated about 30km south-west of Paris. I was wondering if it would be possible to place a small note in the magazine to the effect that I would be grateful if there were riders who would be prepared to let me know of good contacts for trail riding in Northern France (Good routes, areas to avoid, possibly organised trail rides and so on). The address and fax number are below. Thanks.

On a personal note, I have yet to meet anyone from the T.R.F. as I joined the T.R.F., bought a bike and left for France within one week. However, I fully intend to find a local group when I return to the U.K. I live on a farm on the Worcestershire/Gloucestershire border.

Secondly riding in France is great as there are virtually no cars though my most enjoyable experience so far was riding across the causeway to Mont-St-Michel in the early morning sunlight. Bikes can park right at the foot of the Mont.

Once again, many thanks.

Christopher Padfield, 1 Chemin des Roches, 78720 DAMPIERRE, FRANCE

THIEVING LANDOWNERS

With all the recent publicity regarding a child killer and the principle that criminals should not profit from their illegal acts. Could the same not be said about landowners who illegally obstruct green lanes and profit from the added value to their property, or the crop which is grown on the lane.

Mary Stevens

SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND THOUGHTS AFTER OUR EASTER TRAIL RIDING TRIP

About 200 metres into the lane we were met by a lady standing in the middle of the lane in front of the only house on the five mile track. "Did you know -" she said "this lane has been closed by LARA" "No" I said "There was no notice saying so." "Ah" she said "That's because we're selling the house and we have people coming to see it so we took it down!" (The notice, I assumed, not the house). "But you can ride it if you like!" So we did (the lane, that is - not the

notice)

A previous lane had a LARA notice on it, I was told by the back marker, but I had missed it in the blizzard.

We rode both of these lanes with little difficulty, but considerable chagrin at the excessive damage to stretches of the lane, very obviously by AWD vehicles. The twin ruts were acting as ever deepening, inescapable rails. Inevitably, on some hilly sections, the weather had exacerbated the damage, leaving chasms up to 1.5 metres deep!

I find myself in a bit of a dilemma! I think I am a tolerant man able to see the other man's point of view and give people the benefit of the doubt. On the other hand I do not subscribe 100% to the "Forgive them for they know not what they do" philosophy, particularly when it is patently obvious that they ought to know what they are doing.

I am sure that many AWD drivers are aware of this problem and act responsibly, but a few mavericks (like in our fraternity) can do tremendous harm, not only to the land but to their own cause (*Ed. - and ours*)

The dilemma is this, do I slag off all AWD vehicles and lobby for a ban by weight or width or lie back and tell myself "They have as much right as I do to use these lanes"?

As far as I can see, WE didn't contribute significantly to the damage, WE can easily avoid the worst of it and WE should not be restricted by a blanket ban.

We have ridden in this area for over 20 years now and most of the problems have appeared during the last 4 - 5 years. There is, I am told, a commercial "off road" driving concern in the area, but in every other respect it is a little used region. Over four days we saw (on the trail) no other motorcycles, a dozen or so walkers, half a dozen mountain bikes and no horses (only a few tracks). This is a problem which will have to be addressed (there are many other lanes going the same way!), but is it fair that we should be penalised for problems not of our making?

Tony McCusker (Ken One) - Herts Group

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Giant step forward for Pendle Hill



Work on the footpath is nearly completed, with just some re-vegetation works, turfing and re-seeding around the flagstones still to take place over the next two weeks.

Planning officers expect the path will help reduce the erosion problems the hill has experienced over the last few years, as a result of thousands of walkers and livestock taking off large sections of top soil.

Its construction has gone down well with people from many walks of life.

"Surprisingly there have been no criticisms of the path. People appreciate that they can walk on that route without sinking into peat. Farmers are happy because their flocks can now graze in the area and conservationists are happy that the environment is being protected," added Mr Oyston.

Now the newly-appointed National Commissioner of the Countryside Commission Dr Victoria Edwards (pictured on a recent visit to Pendle Hill) plans to use Pendle as a case study for a new book on multiple use commons she is writing.

PROVISION for Pendle Hill ramblers and walkers has taken a giant step forward, thanks to the Countryside Commission.

Those scaling one of Lancashire's most famous summits can now walk with their heads held high, after a 750m long stone path has been laid down at the cost of £45,000. The path has been constructed from 755 millstone grit slabs with a combined weight of 250 tons, marrying old and new methods. As we reported at the time, a helicopter was used to drop the slabs on the peak of the hill and then traditional techniques were used to lay the path similar to those used for old pack-horse tracks in the South Pennines.

The stones have returned to their original source after a gap of nearly 200 years, as Lancashire County Council Countryside Ranger Mr David Oyston explained, "We reclaimed the stones from a disused mill in Bury, but they were quarried from Pendle over 200 years ago. So it's a case of the stone coming home after all these years. We have been careful to use natural material in keeping with the rest of the environment."

Taken from the Clitheroe Advertiser & Times, May 14th 1998

It seems acceptable, even laudable, to cause surface damage if it is caused by boots (but no wheels!) and there's always someone there to pick up the bill - in this case the £45,000 funding came from the Countryside Commission, Lancashire County Council and Europe.

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