

## GROUPS

**AXE VALE** Gwyn Thomas, Tel: 01749 675294  
2nd Mon, *The Star, Star (A38), Nr. Shipham, Somerset*

**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** John Brooker, Tel: 01767 692805  
1st Thurs, *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 Thurs, *The Ship, Wadebridge*

**CUMBRIA** Richard Smith, Tel: 015394 33470  
2nd Tues, *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 400937  
2nd Tues, *The Welcome Stranger, Bickington, Nr. Newton Abbott*

**DORSET** Paul Jackson, Tel: 01305 772208  
1st Tues, *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 Tues, *Boot & Shoe, Gowdall, Nr. Snaith*

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

**EXMOOR** Ron Rickarby, Tel: 01271 326653  
2nd Wed, *The Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham, A396 1 mile north of Tiverton*

**GLOUCESTER** Wayne Little, Tel: 01452 611735  
1st Tues, *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 70680  
1st Tues, *Stafford Arms, Bagnall & 3rd Tue, Cheshire Cheese, Buxton*

**ISLE OF WIGHT** Mark Gregory, Tel: 01983 867730  
1st Thurs, *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 Tues, *Hindshhead Pub on A49, Charnock Richard*

**LINCOLNSHIRE** Alan Wilkinson, Tel: 01529 460793  
4th Thurs, *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 Tues, 7pm, *Just Harleys, Sandyford, Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

**NORTH WALES** John Mills, Tel: 01477 534425  
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**OXFORDSHIRE** Kevin Lindsey, Tel: 01993 841179  
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**PEAK DISTRICT** Simon Mason, Tel: 01773 713188  
1st Thurs, 8pm, *Travellers Rest, Ashbourne Road, Derby*

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2nd Tues, *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 Thurs, *Ring for Details*

**SOUTHERN** Russ McDermid, Tel: 01703 812371  
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1st Thurs, *Welsh Institute of Sport, Cardiff, 8pm*

**SOUTH WEST WALES**  
Mark Rowntree, Tel: 01792 844316  
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**SUFFOLK** Richard May, Tel: 01787 374073  
Last Wed, *Manger Pub, A134 Sudbury Rd, Bury-St-Ed.*

**SWINDON** Pete Owen, Tel: 01793 750557  
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**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**  
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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 YORKSHIRE** Gordon Carr, Tel: 01729 830569  
1st & 3rd Thurs, *Bankfoot Cricket Club, Wickets Close, (off Cleckheaton Rd), Odsal, Bradford*

**WILTSHIRE** Bill Riley, Tel/Fax: 01225 863811  
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**WORCESTERSHIRE** David Gunster, Tel: 01905 616400  
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# TRAIL

DECEMBER, 1998

No. 244

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

EDITOR: Fred Ellison.



Ian Wright on the Cam Fell Road, The Dales. Photo by Alan Hodson.

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# Merry Christmas



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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.*



Just when you thought that you might be able to afford that nice new bike, thanks to those nice grey importers forcing down the inflated prices that we are expected to pay in the U.K., along comes that nasty Mr. Honda who thinks that we should go back to the bad old days when you could not afford a new bike. Mr. Honda is taking to court four of these importers on the basis that they might be infringing trademark copywrite and also on the basis of the lowering of safety standards? All when we were just getting used to the idea of affordable motorcycling.

There must be something fundamentally wrong when we have to pay more for our food, beer, wine, cars, bikes, etc. than our fellow Europeans. So get your Christmas cheer from across the channel and get your reasonably priced bike for January 1999 before the courts decide that you must pay more because you live on this wonderful green island of ours.

Alan Kind, editor of Byways and Bridleways magazine, has taken Cumbria County Council to court over the repair of an ancient road, but he has had to pay his own costs. The Council found the road on a map drawn up in 1892 by a county surveyor, but after being shown a map made by John Loudon Macadam, the road surface inventor, they agreed to accept responsibility. The Council's representative said that if Mr. Kind had told them about this map in the first place the case would not have gone as far as court and the Judge agreed that therefore Mr. Kind should pay his own expenses. Alan said that it might put

people off taking up these issues if they lost court cases and had to pay the council's costs as well as their own. Perhaps this is what they intend.

Merry Christmas and Happy (riding of many trails in the) New Year. I'll look forward to some good Christmas run reports.

*Fred Ellison*

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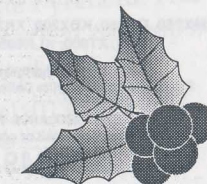
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## Chairman's Chat

The last three years have slipped by so quickly.

Since I took over the TRF Chair from Richard Marshall back in January 1996 my life has seemed to be very full. One thing about

voluntary roles - also called Honorary, which means you don't get paid - is that theoretically you can do as much - or as little - work as you choose. Don't believe it. It's one big con! I think that most people who volunteer for 'Honorary' roles probably put their heart into more than they would in a paid role.

All TRF Officers should be proud to be representing and serving an organisation that I have found is respected by all that know us. As time goes by and we grow in stature and become even more widely known, I hope and believe that we will become even more respected.

On the 2nd November Lord Hardy of Wath stood up in the House of Lords and asked the Government "what action are you taking to prevent or discourage the nuisance and damage caused by the use off the road of unlicensed and uninsured motorcycles, especially where such use depends upon access from the public highway." Lord Strathcarron declared himself as our Patron and made it clear to the House that this does not apply to us and told them that we have a code of practice and that we ride street-legal bikes only where it is legal to do so.

I have a copy of Hansard which is the House of Lords Official Report for that day and would be happy to let anyone have a full copy of the relevant debate.

The last three years has proved an eye-opener for me, particularly regarding the amount of background work which is done - by quite a lot of people - in order to keep our Club and our hobby going.

The Groups, the Regions and the National Executive, whilst having differing types and scales of problems to deal with, are all - I hope - working to a common goal. That is the continuance of trail riding and the Trail Riders Fellowship as the undoubted leaders of Trail Riding in Great Britain.

Now for some serious trail riding while I can still manage to get my leg over (the saddle that is!)

Tony Stuart

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## NOTICE BOARD

### Teeside & N. Yorks. TRF

Starting from the 6th Jan. '99, there will ALSO be a meeting held at The Bridge Hotel, Catterick, N. Yorks. at 8.30 p.m. on the 1st Wed. of every month. For further info please ring Stuart Jerram on 01609 760288.

### David Riley

from Stoke-on-Trent, KDX200 rider (Powys).  
Please ring Nick on 01933 315307.

### NEXT EXEC. MEETING

23rd January 1999  
Beckett's Island Shop and Restaurant, Heath Farm, Alcester Road, Wythall, Birmingham, B47 6AJ.  
Tel: 01564 823402.

### Information Requested

Next year a group of us are planning a trip trail riding to the Pyrenees and Andorra. We are sailing to Bilbao then riding into the Pyrenees. Has anyone trail ridden in that area, got any contacts, tips, marked up maps, information or advice. Please help us with our plans.

Mark Phillips, 155 Longmoor Lane, Breason, Derby, Tel: 01332 874947

### Bikers Wanted

19 - 35 to tour Scotland, Iceland, the whole of Europe and every peculiar corner of the planet.

Write to discuss ideas to G. Morgan, 6 Fairleigh Road, Pontcanna, Cardiff, Wales. Time on your hands? Go for it!!

### Newly Formed Axe Vale Group

Axe Vale TRF operates in North Somerset, Bath and N. E. Somerset, Somerset and Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

All new members welcome

### Congratulations

to Ron Walker from Hull. He is the winner of this year's Calendar Competition. A sweatshirt is winging it's way to you Ron.



## Good Reasons To Be A TRF Member

- Meet and ride with fellow trail riders.
- Over 40 local groups nationally - with regular meetings, social events, trail rides and other activities.
- Find out where you can ride legally - group Rights of Way Officers liaise with Highway Authorities to keep group maps up-to-date and research to uncover hidden evidence.
- The TRF will safeguard members' rights - using legal action if required.
- You can contact any member across Great Britain and may arrange to ride in their locality: with their local knowledge.
- Lively monthly bulletin - the Trail - written by members for the members.
- Advice on motorcycles, maintenance, riding skills, etc.
- Trail riding trips abroad.
- Discounts at motorcycle and outdoor leisure shops - both from TRF membership and from the TRF's affiliation to the British Motorcyclists Federation.
- Voluntary TRF national and group Officers:

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- Liaise to improve mutual understanding with other users, landowners, Highway Authorities, Government and other bodies;

- Campaign to conserve green lanes and to afford them with a recognisable modern status, improve consultation and maintain sustainable responsible enjoyment by trail riders.

• The TRF also links with the BMF, the motoring organisations' Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA) and Codever (Europe-wide) to represent trail riders' interests.

Activities vary between groups - all members are volunteers - perhaps you can help?

Mark Holland,

Honorary National Public Relations Officer

## IMPLEMENTING THE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Meeting on Saturday, 23rd January, 1999 will structure it's agenda to focus on those things that are necessary to implement the Forward Plan. Building on the work of the September Executive Meeting chaired by Jonathan, we have agreed that we will create an Agenda which will concentrate on trying to do a few things well and all of them action orientated.

Starting at 10.30 a.m., finishing at 4.30 p.m. - with an hour for lunch - the plan is to split the day into 4 parts, 3 of them to be key items from the plan and the fourth and last to be Any Other Business. Anyone wishing to bring reports or other significant business from 1998 is asked to bring it as a handout so that it can easily be circulated and incorporated into the flow of the day.

It is anticipated that the three initial items to be discussed from the Forward Plan will be:

Rights of Way Work: including the latest update on liaison with the Countryside Commission over 'R.O.W. in the 21st Century.'

Training and Succession: what is your local and regional need? Let's identify the scope, content, depth and time available. Then agree to where and when.

Public Relations: what is needed as a priority now? How can we meet it? Gain agreement on what is to be done and move forward.

The intention is to make better use of everyone's time and skill, so the meeting is likely to break into smaller groups from time to time to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Please discuss this proposal at your next Club Meeting to ensure that your ideas will be brought forward by your most appropriate delegate.

Dave Giles



### Riding With Roger (Harris that is) - THIS MONTH'S TIP

When fitting a tyre, coat the inside with talcum powder to reduce the chance of pinching the tube.

Washing up liquid or Swarfega helps the tyre to slip on. You can also wash your hands when you have finished!



# RoW NEWS

## RoW OFFICER'S REPORT

Well this is it! My last report as National Rights of Way Officer of the Trail Riders Fellowship. My best wishes go to Richard Marshall the National RoW Officer for 1999; don't forget though that keeping green lanes open is the responsibility of us all, not just that of a few individuals.

It's been three years since I volunteered to take on a co-ordinating role in 1995 and then election at the 1995 AGM. I guess that the most significant event in that time was the Norton Malreward case. We shall certainly be effected by the result of that defective judgement in the future. That might not be a bad thing though. As I said in one of my previous reports the decision simply showed the defectiveness of previous legislation over the last 50 years.

One of my other memories was how, within a few months of taking office I was told that we had £17 left in the Fighting Fund! Happily our situation is much better and we have a Fighting Fund well into five figures. This is already working to protect some of our members accused of "trespassing" whilst riding a RuPP with good historic rights. I was surprised when Dave Tilbury wrote a letter in last months Trail saying that perhaps our members who were stopped by Mr Hedderson of Bugbys Farm, Great Munden (OS Map 166 348239) had the wrong attitude. It should be sufficient to say that I am well informed that Mr Hedderson and his wife are members of the notorious GLEAM; the organisation that is dedicated to stop people driving past their houses. I wish they could have done something about the 400 million vehicles that used to drive past my previous house on the A2 over the 10 years I lived near there! By the way our legal advice is that we should continue to use the RuPP. Mention section 137 of the Highways Act 1980, which makes obstruction of the Queens Highway an offence. We certainly shall. Our solicitors are onto the case, at TRF expense, and I'm not going to let this one go even as an ex. TRF RoW Officer.

One of the final tasks of this year is the response to the Countryside Commission's Rights of Way in the 21st Century. However unlike many countryside documents, this one does not totally ignore motorised use of the countryside or simply say that we are a problem that may have to be curtailed. They have at last recognised there is some scope for a more effective approach to managing vehicular rights of way. We are responding to this as I write and hope that the Countryside Commission will listen to the TRF, LARA and the other green lane users and develop our ideas for the common good.

Finally, in just over a year's time we shall be celebrating 30 years of the TRF.

The 25-year marker passed without much recognition in 1995. Should we not make 30 years something special? The photograph of John Ebrell on Long Lane in 1963 was rather poignant and makes me feel that we are preserving something worthwhile that should not be lost. This is not to forget others who enjoyed the freedom of motorcycling before him and that of the rich heritage of roads as they all once were; our green lanes, which we can still ride today and given our vigilance, will still be able to do, well into the 21st century.

*Steve Neville, National Rights of Way Officer 1996 - 98*

## ROW REPORT

In July 1998 a public meeting was called in Llangollen, at the council chamber, to deal with a number of complaints received from members of the public about the activities of off-road 4x4 vehicles and motorbikes, particularly in connection with four local trails, including Alt y baddi.

The first meeting was confrontational and rowdy and serious accusations were made about noisy and dangerously fast bikes ruining the lives of people living near the trails, putting children's lives in peril, causing deaths of sheep, etc.

Calls were made for closures, speed restrictions, police action, but, since the senior highways officials had not attended and the precise legal position of the trails was uncertain, the meeting was adjourned to be continued at a later date

when all the facts would be available. At the meeting John Mills offered to publish details of the affected trails in the TRF bulletin 'Trail' and requested details of precisely which trails were involved, since it was not clear of the identity of two of the trails. This information has not been received.

The second meeting on 10th November, attended by a number of Llangollen Motor Club members, the writer representing the T.R.F., the Chief Highways Officer for Denbighshire, plus many members of the public, was an altogether more ordered affair.

The Highways Officer explained the legal status of the trails in question and advised that it was not an option he was considering to put closure orders on them or apply speed restrictions. This was mainly due to the fact that experience elsewhere had shown that it

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did not do much good as they were still driven and ridden as before. There was then a good discussion about the necessity to get the Police involved to enforce the law as it stands. Several people reported groups of un-licensed moto-cross bikes using local trails.

The suggestion by the Highways Officer that the use of these trails should be "Managed" by all the user groups together with the Council and Highways Authority was almost unanimously welcomed by the meeting. It was resolved to bring the matter up at the next Council Meeting, try and involve the Police and bring about a mutual management scheme.

I will report on future progress. Please will all members continue to ride considerately near Llangollen.

*Ted Scott*

**Ed.** This shows the value of the TRF Code of Conduct - but I can't help thinking that as two of the trails in question were not named they might not even exist.

## OBITUARY

Sadly, I have to report the sudden death of my friend and long standing Southern Group member Frank Page.

I have known Frank for over 30 years and during those years, together with his wife Penny, his activities centred around riding and organising trials and enduros and in his later years his attention also turned towards trail riding.

Frank was the most generous of people, both in thought and deed. If you had a problem Frank was there and you didn't have to ask. The dreaded puncture - Frank was there. Short of a run leader - Frank was there. Engine problems, welding, electrical - give Frank a ring.

His involvement in the TRF was great. Inquiries, Council Meetings, site meetings, etc. you could always expect a sensible opinion from Frank.

In his later years he suffered greatly with arthritis in his hands, but unlike most of us he didn't complain and was still out trail riding, working at horse events and mountain biking. Frank's death at a very active 66 came as a devastating shock and he will be missed more than we can imagine.

Frank and Penny had taken early retirement and I know that the last few years have been ones to treasure.

The word Fellowship appears in our title and that word was Frank Page.

*Peter Wildsmith, Hampshire*

## • FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SEC •

Well folks - it's that time of year again - yes it's renewal time! With this issue of Trail you should receive a renewal form so please complete it and send it back promptly with your cheque to the new Membership Secretary, John Pritchard, who is eager to get started in his new position!

If you have only just joined but still receive a form, try and encourage a friend to join! Make sure that you read the form and PLEASE print your name and address clearly so that John doesn't have to spend ages trying to decipher your scribbles. (You should see some of them - you might know where you live but we don't).

I have enjoyed my four years as Membership Secretary - thanks to all of you for your support. I have made a few mistakes (a classic one after just a few weeks of starting the job. I nearly threw away about £400 worth of cheques by accident. It was lucky that the dustmen came late that week!).

A big thank you to the 'lick and stick' team for sticking all those labels on the envelopes. You have stuck nearly 100,000 labels and 100,000 envelopes in four years! Keep up the good work and thank goodness for self adhesive labels. Imagine licking that lot!

Thanks again to everyone and good luck to John Pritchard.

*Graham Stratford*

## • The Derbyshire Weekend Event •

The Derbyshire Weekend event in May this year turned out to be a success. Details of the fund raising was issued in October's TRAIL.

Ray Clayton of the Green Lanes Association and Karen Wilson of the Peak District Group are again arranging next year's bash at The Bull in Thorn Pub near Buxton.

The monies raised will be donated to The Peak Park Ranger Authority to help support projects being undertaken at that time or to a particular green lane repair project.

As yet, the money raised this year for Roych Clough has not been designated, thus increasing in interest in the Ilkeston Permanent Building Society. I have been informed that it will be required in the Spring of 1999, when it will go towards buying trees and fencing materials.

If anyone wishes to help in the Conservation Project at Roych Clough early next year, planting trees, erecting fencing, etc. please let me know. Telephone: 0115 930 0414.

*Karen Wilson, Peak District Group*



# NEVADA

Howdy there you rock shifting, dust raising, mud splashing, throttle happy, beer swilling motorcycle 'Ass Holes'. Roughly translated into Queens English from the North Nevada dialect of American-eze that sentence means "Hello all you nice off road motorcycle chaps" But please be careful how you use this word if (when?) you visit Nevada. If the words 'Ass Hole' are preceded by the word 'Dam' then it means you have offended someone and you are likely to be used for six gun practise. You have to pick these things up quickly if you want to survive 6 days of trail riding and 6 nights of "socialising with the locals" courtesy of Matt Ernst of Nevada Motorcycle Adventures.

By now you may have gathered that I have been on what I consider to be the trail riding adventure of a lifetime. I managed to avoid the rattlesnakes, mountain lions, grizzly bears, gun toting cowboys, casinos (we won't mention the cat houses) and enormous portions of food and so live to tell the tale. Now I am not the first to write about Nevada Motorcycle Adventures in this magazine, but in all



honesty the earlier reports really did not do it justice. No doubt the earlier scribes were all better riders than writers. I, on the other hand, know my riding is rubbish!

All great adventures have problems. Mine started when I arrived at San Francisco airport but my luggage did not. Eventually it was discovered that the United Airlines baggage handlers had left it behind at Heathrow. The words Dam

Ah Soles come immediately to mind. After two hours of fruitless enquiries, I took an internal flight and arrived at Reno ready to start 6 days of trail riding through deserts and mountains splendidly equipped with crash hat, corded jeans, a pair of trainers and one small bag of underwear. I need not have worried. Matt Ernst got stuck into United Airlines on my behalf using the words Dam Ass Holes quite a lot. He eventually got them to promise to deliver my luggage to Carson City in two days time and, I suspect, re-arranged the tour schedule to make sure we were there on that day. He then did what United Airlines would not and got me riding by producing some old gear for me to use in the interim.

From then on my fortunes changed and I had the motorcycle adventure of my life. Now this Matt Ernst is a real trail riding enthusiast. As well as being a keen motorcyclist he clearly is a man whose soul is in sympathy with the land. He spent 2 years exploring the old gold miners roads, stage coach roads, Indian trails etc. in North Nevada before starting in business as a fully licensed (and fully equipped) motorcycle guide. He now has access to 20,000 miles of trails in an area the size of Wales. The inclusive package is bike, fuel, food, accommodation on a guided tour of some of the best trails in Nevada and I seriously doubt if they come any better anywhere in the world. The group's luggage was transported to our destination for the night in a huge 4 wheel drive pickup truck towing a six bike trailer and a spare bike. Every morning his mechanic would refuel and check the bikes over so all we riders had to do was press the magic button to fire up the motors. The bikes were DR 350 E's shod with knobbies and fitted with long range plastic tanks. Each morning, after breakfast, Matt would spend 15 minutes or so on the phone to his numerous contacts around the State gathering the latest information on the state of the trails (amount of water, snow, etc.) before deciding on the day's route and final destination. If necessary, he even has friends prepared to jump in an aeroplane to check out the trails. Each day we would cover 120/150 miles of trails varying from deserts to mountains 10,000 feet high. His knowledge of the geology, geography and history of the area is as vast as the country itself. It seemed as if every other hour we would stop somewhere, be it a ghost town, abandoned gold mine, or mountain top and Matt would reel off some interesting anecdote about the place. We crossed the deserts where gophers burrowed, rode the plains where wild horses roamed, forded rivers where fish swam and climbed mountains where eagles soared. In the morning we could be up in the snow line and by the afternoon we were bathing in a "hot spring" in the middle of a desert sipping ice cold beer (the backup truck didn't just carry spare bikes and lunch! - them Americans also like the simple pleasures in life). The scenery was as varied as it was stunning. The view from the mountain tops is something you have to experience to appreciate. The Americans tend to use the word "Awesome" almost as slang for something which is just one notch up from OK, but to my mind the views from the mountain tops were absolutely awesome in the true meaning of the word. From day one I was absolutely gobsmacked by the sheer beauty of this vast



wilderness. The mountains were as magnificent as any around Glen Coe, but there were much, much more of them. The desert could be as lonely as Monks Trod at dusk when your bike has broken down. We mere mortals can only stand in awe when privileged to witness such scenery. Like Matt I pray to God the rich spoiled Yahoos from neighbouring California don't despoil this magnificent wilderness.



Matt can take up to a dozen riders in a party but prefers a few less so he can give more personal attention. Our group comprised 6 friendly Yanks from various parts of the East Coast and one Welshman - me. The others were from various locations on the East coast and their preconceptions of Nevada as a "Death Valley" was quickly dispelled. Gary, Ben, Alex, Deke, Todd and Brandi were all experienced Hare Scramblers (Hare & Hound this side of the pond) riders who loved to race and usually did. Todd was the quickest and in the States he races in the A class which is one below the AA reserved for professionals. Brandi is a lass destined to give many lads an inferiority complex. She combines brains (final stages of a masters degree, planning to work for the FBI etc.) and beauty and can ride like the devil. She won the award for the best "Endo" of the week and when she got cross threaded through some muddy ruts in a big way. The classic "W" followed. I still can't make up my mind to congratulate or commiserate with a gal who can get her legs that far apart whilst upside-down and hanging on to the handlebar of a wayward Suzuki DR 350. To brains and beauty you can add guts. Within minutes she was back on the bike, drifting the back end round every corner. I went at my own pace preferring to see the scenery rather than the inside of an American hospital. But they were a great bunch and one would always wait at each cross road/junction to show the way. They loved big steep hills and would

charge up them in typical scrambles style - mostly out of control, front wheel rearing, legs flailing etc. I just rode up in trials style - standing up, tongue on the front mudguard using the throttle to find grip. I got everywhere they could, only just a little (well, sometimes a lot) later. Although they were much quicker they were happy for me to go at a speed I was comfortable with. We all had plenty of time to rest and take photos whenever we needed. Occasionally Matt would send the "hares" up some dead end climb just to burn off steam while the "tortoises" took time out to soak up the scenery.

The trails varied considerably. There were flat wide dirt highways that crossed deserts and plains; "two track" trails that wound up and along the hilltops; narrow rocky paths carved into the sides of the mountains by the old gold miners; dried up river beds and old stage coach roads meandering through majestic canyons.

Amongst his many other talents Matt was also a weather expert. Often when we would pause on the top of a mountain to admire the view he would be looking across the plains below to the distant horizon to predict with accuracy just where and how fast any storm clouds were going. With 20,000 miles to choose from we just went somewhere else. Only once did we get caught in a rain storm. Heading across a valley bottom dirt road to our lunch stop the temperature suddenly dropped to just above freezing and the heavens opened with a vengeance. Being a seasoned Welsh trail rider I never go far from home without my leggings, so having brought them 6,000 miles I thought it was time to use them. The rest of the group were not so prepared and pushed on, hoping to out-run the rain. Trying to put leggings on whilst preventing a heavy DR 350 sinking in the mud that 5 minutes earlier was a firm dirt road was not easy, but it was worth it. The dirt road turned into a quagmire with rivers of water running down the side (and sometimes across it). When I reached the lunch stop I found a cold, sodden and sorry looking bunch sheltering on the sidewalk of an unoccupied house. I was the only dry, cheerful, rider with the sense to expect rain.

With the bad weather now clearly in for the day most opted to trailer their bikes to the motel and ride in the support truck. Since there was only room for six bikes, Todd, Gary and myself did the manly thing and rode our bikes back. Matt was prepared to ride but we let him rest his foot that he had injured earlier when it came into contact with a rock disguised as a sage bush. His instructions were quite clear. "Follow the dirt road up and over the mountain; turn left by the Indian reservation; straight on until you hit the paved road and follow the signs to Austin - should take about an hour". Like hell it did. After one and a half hours of riding flat out at 65 mph across the plains, back end twitching on the mostly straight dirt road, helmet peak vibrating in sympathy with the engine and with nothing but the sight of an occasional cow to break the monotony we pulled in to confer. In front of us the dirt road seemed to roll on and on into the distant horizon and behind us the black clouds were getting blacker and blacker. We had past the Indian



Reservation some 30 miles back and could not have gone wrong since there was no junction of any kind since then. We decided to carry on towards the horizon. We droned on and on and on. The more we rode the more the road seemed to stretch into the horizon. Yes folks - take it from me - America is a BIG place. After another 30 miles of disheartening, helmet peak vibrating we hit tarmac and a sign pointing to civilisation. Yes - there is a God after all! It was one of those rare motorcycling experiences which we three can look back on with pride and wonder why we were daft enough to volunteer in the first place.

But this trip was not all biking. At the end of every day we would park up the bikes and stroll into a saloon, muddy boots and all. Only later would we bother to change into casuals and return for our evening meal and yet more "social interchange". The saloons always had at least one character. One night we sat at the bar of the International Saloon in Austin drinking with a cowboy wearing a ten gallon hat and a loaded six gun. Believe me, he was not a one off. They claim the guns are for rattlers, but judging by the amount of guns I saw, rattlesnakes will soon be an endangered species. The saloon was run by "Curly". She was a lovely lady of mature years who, if she took a liking to you, delighted in beating the sh-t out of you with a huge fly swat. The Long Branch saloon in Luning was crammed full of old bric-a-brac dating back to the early twenties. The newest thing there was last years dust! The place was run more as a vocation than an occupation by a 70

year old former World War 2 pilot called Pete. He was great. He could sum up the character of any new customer within 15 seconds. If he liked you, you could drink till dawn. If he did not like you he would more than likely throw you out after the first drink. Behind the bar he kept a baseball bat and a shotgun to persuade those reluctant to depart.

There is much more I could say about this trip to Nevada but I won't. If you have even a drop of Castrol R in your blood then get out there and experience it for yourself. Me - I'm going back just as soon as I've got enough Brownie points with the wife.

You can ring Matt direct on 702 359 4380 or contact his British agent Dave Grist of H-C Travel on 01256 770775.

Mike Rees, Gwent

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## BRECON '98

see front  
cover piccy

The forecast for the weekend was favourable and all seemed to be going to plan. Twelve Lancs. and two Swindon 'boys' descended on Wales on the 3rd and 4th October. Bill Spooncer and Trevor Watson travelled north to Brecon while the rest came from various parts of Lancashire. Ian Wright and Andy Chislett from Rochdale, Mark, John Sleaford and Andy Holt from Swinton (Manchester), Rodger and Ron set off near Bolton, Mark Littlehales, Peter Knagg and I travelled together from Astley near Leigh and Brian Cummings and Rodney (from the chippy) came down from Preston.

We all arrived at different times on Friday, but we all congregated in the nearest pub for some liquid refreshment. Saturday greeted me quite well! Breakfast at 8.00a.m. and away by 9.00ish. Roger Wilson (Wizzer) from the Gloucester group joined us again. I'm sure this ex-pat Lancashire Lad had a good day's riding.

We split up into two groups as the numbers were large. Rodger led one party and I took the other. My group's second lane was quite tricky, but it isn't long, thank goodness. I missed this lane as I was still nursing a badly twisted ankle. (Brian thinks I'm a wimp). You turn right just after a small chapel south

of Brecon and ford Afon Cynrig. Ian Wright, a skilful rider seemed to have an off day. Brian took great pleasure from reaching the top first and said "I thought you said Ian was a good rider. I've just seen him stuff it big-style" or something similar! Ian summed it up later in the day. "I don't think I'm ONE with the bike today, I'm TWO with the bike. We took the lanes south to do 'the Gap', swiftly followed by a circuitous route around Tal-y-Bont (plenty of photos). A few more lanes and we had lunch at the Sun Inn at Bwlch, good food and very welcoming. We did Grwynne Fawr the 'easy way' this year (still worried about the ankle). A few more lanes and we headed back to the digs.

I must mention our hosts at the Beacons Guest House. Peter and

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Barbara are superb. They are so helpful, kind and considerate. They have accommodated trail riders for many years and appreciate the problems we face. The rooms and food are excellent and there's a large, safe barn to store the bikes. This accommodation is highly recommended.

Sunday is usually a shorter day, so we don't get back home too late. We usually do the lanes to the west of Brecon, around Sennibridge. The day began with everyone going to the petrol station. It was quite a sight, 14 motorcycles on the forecourt. Everything seemed to be going smoothly, however, we did not realise that the other group had left behind Bill Spooncer. Luckily as the tail end was riding round the island, Bill was looking for his own group. He decided to join our group as Rodger's group had disappeared. We started riding the lanes to the north of Sennibridge heading towards Pentre Bach. Then, on the way to Llwyel, we saw two Red Kites soaring on the thermals about 6m above our heads. What a sight!

The next lane began near the side of a derelict motel. This was the only rocky climb of the weekend that I mastered. It was quite a pleasure to reach the top without too much trouble. We needed to get back quite early, so I decided to go down Sarn Helen before returning to Brecon. The more southerly part of this lane I hadn't done before. I decided to take a short cut through the forest and head near Ystradfellte for the return. The short cut, however, was in fact no short cut at all. We met some Welsh lads who were amused by us attempting the lane in this direction. It proved to be a challenging ascent. However, most of the party achieved the summit without damaging themselves or their mounts too much! Unfortunately this was the last lane of the weekend. We then took the side roads to head for the main road to connect with the A470 and home to Brecon. Fortunately, both groups arrived at the guesthouse at the same time. Then everyone said their goodbyes and went on their merry way. This was another great weekend in the depths of Wales. We will definitely be back, the sooner the better.

Alan Hodson



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# COAST TO COAST TO COAST..ish

PLAN A: Most of us to meet at Rivington Barn, then go to Rochdale to meet Ian Wright. I set off from home about 6.10 a.m. on Tuesday morning. I met Gary Longmire and Simon Guy travelling on the road to the barn. Rodger Davies and Ron Varey were waiting for us. We headed to Ian's house. When we arrived Ian was ready, but Rodger's XT350's front wheel bearings had collapsed!


PLAN B: Rodger said "You lot go ahead and I'll meet you at Sutton Bank. I'll go back home, get my XT600 and I'll join you there".

This 2-day ride was Ian Wright's brainchild. "Have you ever thought of doing a coast to coast" he said at one club night. "We could ride to the East coast picking up a few lanes, stay overnight somewhere and come back the next day". Sounds simple! Little did I realise what a logistics exercise this would turn out to be. The next time I think I'll just ignore him, but in reality I know I'm gullible.

Rodger was organising the 'digs'. However, after some fruitless searches he asked me to sort it out as he was due to go on holiday. I thought I may need the help of my good friend Dave Loney from the Yorkshire group. I rang Dave about accommodation and he passed me on to Gordon Carr. Gordon's wife gave me several numbers to contact and eventually we were sorted. Thanks for all your help folks!

We set off going NE towards Blubberhouses. We travelled a few lanes in Lancashire before setting off over Ilkley Moor to eventually arrive at Blubberhouses. As time was of the essence we then did a long haul on the tarmac to meet Rodger at Sutton Bank. We met and had 'elevenses' at Sutton Bank.

We did the Drove Road first, then Beadlam and Rudland Rigg. We took in several lanes of the North York Moors, including a stop at Rievaulx Abbey and onward to Robin Hood's Bay. The last lane before the Bay was Throstle Nest. What a beauty! A nice nadgery climb. What a way to end the day. We dipped our toes in the North Sea before travelling about 40 miles back to the digs at Croft-on-Tees, North East of Scotch Corner. We stayed at Clow Beck House

  
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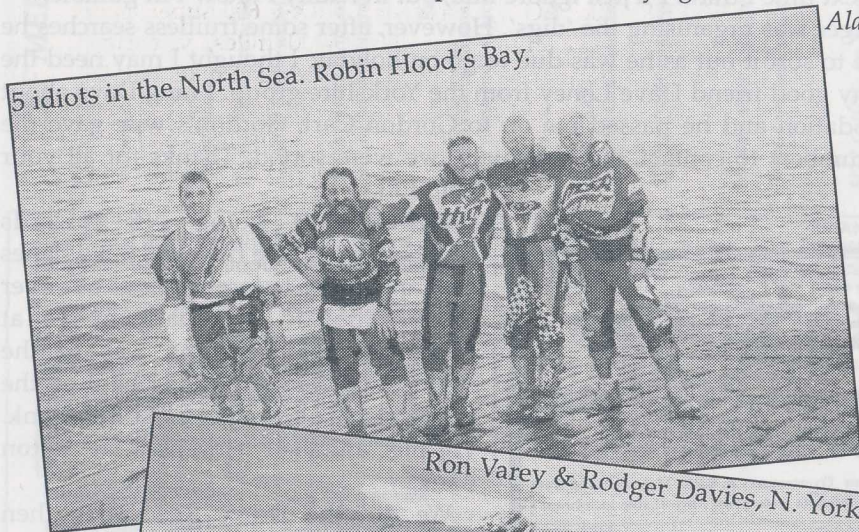
(01325 721075). The accommodation was first class and quite grand. Nevertheless, we received a warm welcome and I would recommend it to anyone.

Wednesday's weather was a bit grey and overcast, but it didn't dampen our spirits. We headed NW towards the lanes south of Barnard Castle and Barningham. We arrived at Tan Hill after travelling over Arkengarthdale Moor. We then descended Fremington Edge to call for coffee at Reeth. A few more lanes and lunch at Hawes Cafe. We decided that we didn't want to go to the coast, as it would have meant travelling fewer lanes, so we headed south for Settle down the Pennine Way. Rodger left us at Settle to head home to Chorley. We went down the Coach Road to Long Preston and the last lane of our journey was Coal Pit Lane. We said our cheerios to Ian at Barrowford and four bum-sore travellers went home via the M56, M66 and M62.

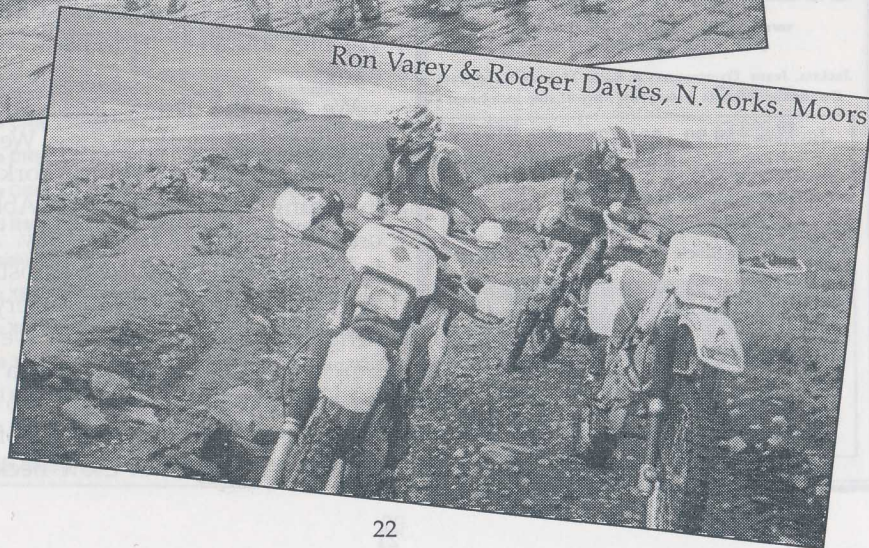
An interesting two days, some great lanes, but a bit too much tarmac. I think we would have different arrangements next time. Nevertheless, we would all like to go back to travel the lanes of that part of the country again.

Alan Hodson

5 idiots in the North Sea. Robin Hood's Bay.



Ron Varey & Rodger Davies, N. Yorks. Moors



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**KTM 620EGS-E** 1998 3000m, excellent condition. Road/trail use only. Bargain at £3250. Tel: 01347 878476 (Yorkshire).

**HUSQVARNA WR250** 1989 Taxed and Tested. Sound and reliable. £550. Tel: 01603 270380 (Norwich).

**YAMAHA SRX-6 600** super single road bike 1985. 4000 miles, v. clean, £1500. **Moto Guzzi 750** road bike, red, 1989 low miles, £2000. Possible part ex. trail bike 200/350 cc (fourstroke). **Honda Generator** 2.2 KVA as new. £320. Tel: 01298 26201 (Buxton).

**KAWASAKI KLX650.** N Reg. 7000 miles, many extras, excellent condition priced to sell at £2500 no offers. Tel: 01332 874947, Derby

**ENDURO BOOTS** Sidi Top Action Evolution Moto. Size 45 Euro/UK 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>. Brand new and unworn, still boxed. Cost £190, accept £125. Tel: John 01845 578389.

