

## 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 Jon Black, Tel: 01179 535040  
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  
John Lay, Tel: 01206 263912, Mobile: 0831 886032  
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 Wed, *The Winget Social Club, Tuffley Avenue, 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, *Hindshead 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 01993 261 9629  
1st Tues, 7pm, *Just Harleys, Sandyford, Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

NORTH WALES John Mills, Tel: 01477 534425  
1st Wed, *Hope & Anchor, Ewloe Place, Buckley*

OXFORDSHIRE Kevin Lindsey, Tel: 01993 841179  
3rd Thurs, *The Red Lion, 127 Cassington Road, Yarnton*

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

RIBBLE VALLEY Peter Higham, Tel: 01200 424947  
2nd Tues, *Pendle Hotel, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59)*

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

SOMERSET Steve Hounsell, Tel: 01460 66452  
Last Thurs, *The Bell Hotel, Currey Rivel, Nr. Taunton*

SOUTHERN Russ McDermid, Tel: 01703 812371  
3rd Tues, *The Phoenix, Twyford, Nr. Winchester*

SOUTH LONDON & SURREY  
Steve Sharp, 0181 773 4204  
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 Thurs, *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  
Mark Bieganski, Tel: 01904 656469  
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 Colin Bott, Tel: 01386 834105  
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  
1st Tues, *The Toll Gate, Holt, Trowbridge*

WORCESTERSHIRE David Gunster, Tel: 01905 616400  
3rd Tuesday, *The Fox at Bransford, Worcs.*

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



Patron: Lord Strathcarron

# TRAIL

APRIL, 1999

No. 248

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

EDITOR: Fred Ellison.



Ledantes Track, Picos de Europa. See article on p13. Photo by Vic Price.

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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.*

## EDITORIAL

Is trail riding becoming a high profile fashionable hobby to have? If you read the Daily Telegraph (which incidentally prides itself on addressing all the green issues) you could be forgiven for thinking that this is the case. Two trail bike tests in a month, the first being impressions of a Suzuki DR350 and the writer waxing lyrical about green laning, and a mention of the TRF (but unfortunately they gave Graham Stratford as the contact not John Pritchard) and the latest is a road test (black and green) of a Husqvarna TE410E which is a fully road legal, electric start super trail machine, but at 325lb dry which must be 350lb with oil and fuel I think I might prefer the little old XL/XR that Frank Melling sniggers at (he likens them to taking the new girlfriend out in an old Escort van) and compares having the Husky to a Man. United shirt.

If the media carries on in this vein I can see us all on the latest trail iron wearing brightly coloured lycra and anything else deemed fashionable. Perish the thought. It makes you want to wear waxed cotton!

Do you think we can handle this high profile? All comments to the Editor.

*Fred Ellison*

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## Sharing

It's 10 years since a column with this title has appeared in Trail but after careful reflection I have decided to resurrect it rather than use the more recent heading of 'Chairman's Chat' because it gives an indication 'up front' of my perception of this role: that of working with the membership and not for them. It is a voluntary organisation which means that nobody gets paid for what they do, so it's only fair that the work-load gets shared out between the membership and everyone is involved actively in supporting the cause.

The cause is clear: it is 'To preserve and protect the full status of vehicular Green Lanes and the rights of motorcyclists and others to use them - as a legitimate part of the access network to the countryside'. That's what we are about and as an organisation we will continue to defend those rights and those of our membership who fairly fall foul of others who would stop them from going about their chosen legitimate access to the countryside.

The memory is still fresh in my mind's eye, but it must be about 15 years now since I stood in the Gloucestershire sunshine and disagreed with Clive who was saying that trail riding would be dead and buried within 10 years, so what the hell, let's just get on with it while it lasted. It's 10 years now since as the National Chairman between '89 - '92, I coined our mission statement as being - 'To be riding as many, if not more, lanes by the end of the century as we are now'. That we are has had nothing to do with saying 'What the hell' and everything to do with becoming a founder member of LARA, supporting the BBT, running quality RoW training conferences, and representing ourselves with the Countryside Commission, Country Landowners, National Farmers Union and so on through the endeavours of a band of stalwarts who stood up for the TRF at all levels of representation and public inquiry. (Thank you guys, you know who you are). And furthermore it has everything to do with requesting and requiring the membership to identify themselves with a current sticker on their bike and to share the rights of way with other users in a considerate manner through living up to our mandatory Code of Conduct. Those who have been in the TRF throughout this time will know what I say to be true, those of you who are new - please take note 'nowt is for nowt' there are no free rides in our world.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find an account of our most recent AGM and you can read there how I come to be in the Chair again, what I stand for and what I will endeavour to do. Please respond to the initiatives and my request for help in sharing the load, as like many of you I too have to earn a living. The TRF needs an effective central body at this time in its history and it badly needs a combination of experience and new energy to create an effective Executive. However, do note that my re-engagement is for the short and not the long term in this caretaker government.

So where are we. What is the 'State of the Union' as I see it?

That you haven't heard from me before in these columns should tell you something. Since early November I have been busy with pressing TRF business and unsure and unwilling to say too much until there had been some achievement and I had a clearer picture of what was happening 'out-there'.

As a broad brush update:-

The first priority was to respond to the Countryside Commission (CoCo) consultation document 'Rights of Way in the 21st Century'. This was done by both personal representation at Cheltenham and in Buxton and by submitting a written response before Christmas. The conclusions and recommendations from that consultative process by CoCo were published in the last week of March as a recommendation to the new Countryside Agency ('Rights of Way in the 21st Century - Conclusions & Recommendations' CCP550) and I believe from what I read that our interventions have paid off. The stage has now been set for RoW in the future and it behoves every Group to get its copy and to join the Executive in determining how we might ensure our continuing presence as a legitimate activity in the countryside. As I read it access may vary across the Country depending upon the effectiveness of local representation.

The second priority has been to try to address recent criticism of Executive Meetings and make them both more attractive and productive. A new more participative format is in operation which is spawning active working groups. The dates and agenda of these meetings are being advertised well in advance through Trail. Despite being without a secretary throughout this period our administration is now up to date and behind the scenes individuals are working on improvements in the system. This year's Handbook is in the process of being revamped and plans for the year 2000 edition are in hand.

The current priority is to address the QUALITY of our RoW information. If you have read what Richard Marshall has had to say in the March edition of Trail (No.247) on pages 6, 7 and 11 you will have gained an insight into why. The working party to move this urgent issue forward will meet as part of the next Executive Meeting on 24th April. All groups have been asked to send Reps and for those reps to bring marked up maps with them. We anticipated that we will be challenged more in the near future, and for the TRF to successfully defend its membership, members must know the historical evidence associated with the routes they are riding. Copies of old marked up maps and 'wish-lists' will in future just not be acceptable.

The future of Trail Riding is best assured by taking appropriate action today, starting with doing more than just paying lip service to our Code of Conduct. We make use of shared routes in the countryside and have to behave in an acceptable manner to the public at large. Furthermore, our usage must be sustainable: it must not cause long term or irretrievable damage and we must be prepared to become involved in the management and maintenance of this public resource (possibly by schemes as the Hierarchy of Trail Routes and Green Lanes Day), or be swept aside.

The first of the promised training events took place on 20th March with a 'Chairman's Conference' when 10 of the 11 chairmen of the TRF's South West Region met for a day to discuss an agenda of their own devising. The outcome was a very productive and encouraging day. A formula that I hope will be taken up by other Regions or a collection of Groups in the near future. Do please ask.

The State of the Union? In the end it will depend on you. If you approve of what I have reported, then say so. If you don't approve of what I have said, then say so, let's get rid of the passengers.

See you on the trail.

Dave Giles

# 1998 TRF AGM MINUTES

held at The Motorcycle Museum, Solihull on the 31st October 1998

## OPENING REMARKS:

The Chairman welcomed everyone and drew attention to copies of the agenda, standing orders and the officers reports which were available. Attendance and Apologies were recorded in the attendance book. No visitors were declared. (51 individuals/27 groups attended).

## APPROVAL OF THE 1997 AGM MINUTES:

At the Chairman's request Tim Stevens read these to the meeting. They were approved as a true record. Proposed by Charlie Morriss, Seconded by Chris Hurworth.

## MATTERS ARISING:

It was requested that future AGMs be held on a Sunday.

Groups were asked to use the Annual Group Information Return that Wayne Little had provided for the important information it contained about the state of the Groups and their liaison with RoW authorities.

There had been progress with the resurrection of the Forward Plan at a special meeting chaired by Jonathan St. John on 5th September. Work from this meeting was in progress. The AGM felt that there was a need for training events to motivate members.

Jeff Ward suggested that one edition of TRAIL should be in the form of a TRF Handbook. It was agreed to look into this.

ACTION: next Exec. Meeting Agenda.

## OFFICERS REPORTS

**Chairman:** Tony Stuart reported on the growth of interest and membership in the TRF this year. Amongst his liaison work an address to members of the Parliamentary Motorcycle Club (Commons & Lords) had been a highlight. Lord Strathcarron continues to be an active patron to the TRF. Tony confirmed that he would not be standing as Chairman in the coming year but would continue to help in other ways. Dave Giles proposed a vote of thanks which was carried unanimously.

**Public Relations Officer:** Mark Holland had listed his considerable activity through the year in his circulated report. In response to a question about a recent (anti-vehicular) account of the Countryside Commission's proposal for 'RoW in the 21st Century' in the Telegraph, Mark said that he has learnt not to respond to media hype as it is often counter productive. However, Richard Marshall felt that on important occasions we should try. Chris Hurworth thought that Sustran's activities were a threat as there was evidence that they persuaded Councils to TRO routes in the name of safety and ruined the ambience of the lane by surfacing it for cyclists. Gwyn Thomas as our Sustran liaison officer requested that the Executive should express their concern to Sustran. The Chairman asked him to draft such a letter for his approval.

ACTION: Gwyn Thomas to draft a letter to Sustran for approval, Mark Holland to send it out.

**Membership Secretary:** Graham Stratford was unable to be with us but he had provided a report which showed that membership was approaching 2000. Colin Patient, who assists

Graham by dealing with inquiries, said that he received most through TBM and Planet Bike publications.

Tim Stevens expressed his concern on reading a letter from a person in Essex who stated that his group was a club and that members need not join the TRF itself. The Chairman replied that the situation was known and it had been made clear to the person concerned that his assertion was not true. Jeff Ward proposed a vote of thanks to Graham. Agreed by all.

**Secretary:** Jonathan St. John apologised for non-circulation of the '97 AGM minutes and the lack of a written report today. Insurance for TRF lane clearing was now up to date. Tim Stevens asked whether the TRF might also wish to consider Fidelity Insurance to give greater cover to itself and its officers. The question of insurance companies suggesting that trail riding invalidated an individual's cover, was thought not to be a matter for the TRF but for the individual and their Company. Jonathan was commended for his efforts towards getting job descriptions for the Officers available and understood.

ACTION: Secretary to publish our insurance cover for lane clearing in TRAIL.

**Treasurer:** Alan Wilkinson took the meeting through the balance sheet of our audited accounts.

The meeting was reminded that the monies for Norton Malreward had yet to be deducted from the accounts. Jeff Ward suggested that we might need to seek a dispensation to avoid corporation tax. There was some concern about the Coast-to-Coast costs, but Fred reported that last year had made a good profit. It was agreed that the accounts would not be published in TRAIL but available to the membership from the Treasurer on request. A vote of thanks was recorded to Alan for his work.

**Editor:** Fred Ellison reported few problems other than a need for more articles. We need to get more businesses to advertise in the bulletin to raise revenue. Would members help with this and also remember to always tell firms they are TRF members when they purchase their goods.

ACTION: Editor to send a complimentary copy of TRAIL to each advertiser.

**RoW Co-ordinator:** Steve Neville was away on holiday but he had circulated his report with the help of Ian Roscoe who was in attendance. Steve wished to draw everyone's attention to two reports: The ENTEC report for the DoE 'Making the Best of Byways' (HMSO) and the 'Hierarchy of Trail Routes' in the Lake District, available from LARA. All Groups should ensure that their local Councils have these reports as a valuable guide to how the Government's intentions on consensus management might be implemented. The TRF will continue to defend members who are wrongly prosecuted: his advice continues to be that we should only ride those RuPPs that have some historical evidence of vehicular rights. Richard Hawker reported that he is co-operating with GLASS over London Gazette notices and that they are making a contribution to the subscription. This was approved. Steve had considered it to have been an honour to have represented the Fellowship over the last three years.

The Chairman and the Meeting thanked all of the officers for their efforts.

## CO-OPTED OFFICERS REPORTS:

**BMF Liaison:** Derrick Collins commended the work of this organisation to us and asked that members send articles for publication in their now monthly journal.

**Display Equipment Co-ordinator:** Jeff Ward reported a good year and the pressing need for someone to take over from him.

ACTION: All members to consider taking up this valuable role.

**Merchandising:** Rob Sawyer explained what was available to the membership as a service.

This now needed to be incorporated into mainstream TRF accounts and possibly to be facilitated in conjunction with a commercial operator.

**ACTION:** Rob to explore this further and report back to the Executive.

**Stationery:** Aelwood Finch was not present. It was thought that stocks were getting low and that this might be an opportunity for a re-vamp.

**ACTION:** Secretary to investigate and report to the Executive.

**Countryside Commission (CoCo), Country Landowners Association (CLA) and National Farmers Union (NFU) Liaison:** David Giles reported that there had been two meetings with the CLA and NFU and one with CoCo where Tim Stevens had represented us. The most significant things to report were: the Rapid Response scheme had recorded only 18 problems nationwide in an 18 month period, which equates with no problem. There was an interest in our 'Sheepwatch Scheme' and the 'Hierarchy of Trail Routes'. The CLA's principle concern at this time was the 'Right to Roam' issue.

The Countryside Commission is in a state of change (they will cease to exist in March 1999 merging with the Rural Development Council to become a new organisation to be called the Countryside Agency). However, they would leave a legacy which would affect us and required our constant vigilance, namely: 'Green Ways', 'Quiet Roads' and 'Rights of Way into the 21st Century'. The latter in particular would be likely to change the law and all groups should look at their proposed objectives - which Dave had circulated to the AGM.

**ACTION:** All Groups to get their own copy of the report from CoCo (free).

**Land Access and Recreation Association (LARA):** Richard Marshall felt that we continued to gain excellent value for money from our association with the other motoring organisations through LARA, especially when we dealt with Government agencies like the Department for the Environment and the Regions (DETR).

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**Equestrian Event Co-ordinator:** Colin Patient felt that our past good work had been recognised and we were now being invited to marshal at prestigious events where we received due public acknowledgement. This was both good PR and financially rewarding.

**ACTION:** Secretary to put 'Bibs' on the agenda of the next meeting.

The Chairman thanked all the co-opted officers for their work.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

**Chairman:** There were two candidates: Jonathan St. John and David Giles.

In proposing Jonathan, Tony Stuart commended him for the work he had done as our current secretary. He felt that his new ideas and energy came as a breath of fresh air to the Fellowship. The nomination was seconded by Richard Hawker.

In proposing David Giles, Bevis Billingham spoke of his very real concern about the CoCo 21 proposals and the need for an experienced chairman to deal with them. The nomination was seconded by Steve Pighills.

Both candidates were then invited to address the meeting.

Jonathan St. John said that he did not propose to lead the membership so much as to represent them. He was concerned that people who were around at the time of Tim Ley would not be in control again, and he read from a member's letter in support of that view point. The TRF needed a new broom.

David Giles explained that he was standing again because, despite his efforts through the bulletin and over the phone, he had failed to find experienced candidates willing to take on officer roles. However, by offering to take the chair again for a year he found that he would be able to form a 'Caretaker Government'. In standing for nomination he was only too aware of the mis-information and lies directed at himself and Richard over the Tim Ley affair. Ironically he said, Tim had been one of the very best officers, serving four chairmen over eight years, which was why he was so trusted. Finally he became unemployed, mentally ill, defrauded us and took his own life. A human tragedy. Do not vote for me unless you are sure, because a chairman needs all the help he can get to cope with TRF business. If elected Dave said he would concentrate on the Forward Plan and training to encourage 'new blood'.

It was now 4pm and the Meeting voted to suspend Standing Orders in order to continue its business.

Both candidates were asked to leave the room.

Peter Banks said that he was unhappy with both candidates, and suggested an alternative method of finding a candidate through the Regions. But the Meeting thought it needed to find a Chairman now. Peter asked those who agreed with him to indicate this by abstaining. The vote was then taken resulting in Johnathan St. John gaining 17 votes, David Giles 22 votes and there were 6 abstentions.

**ACTION:** David Giles will be Chairman for 1999.

**Vice Chairman:** There were no nominations. David Giles said that he would look further.

**Secretary:** After some discussion Jonathan St. John agreed to stay in post until a volunteer was found.

**Treasurer:** Alan Wilkinson agreed to continue.

**Rights of Way Officer:** Richard Marshall, proposed by Kevin Marsh, seconded by Frank Diamond, was elected.

**Public Relations Officer:** Mark Holland agreed to continue.

**Bulletin Editors:** Fred Ellison agreed to continue, as did Chris Higham as Assistant Editor.

**Membership Secretary:** John Pritchard, nominated by Tony Stuart, seconded by Richard

Hawker, was elected.

All the Co-opted Officers agreed to continue. Jeff Ward and Rob Sawyer pro-tem.

#### MOTIONS:

Mark Holland presented the Meeting with the revised Constitution, which incorporated the amendments requested following its circulation in TRAIL. Richard Marshall proposed the further amendment of changing 'shall' to 'may' in section 5.5 so that it now reads 'Acceptance of Membership may be subject to approval of the Executive Committee and may be suspended by a majority vote of the Executive Committee';

Acceptance of the new Constitution as published (with this amendment) was proposed by Colin Patient and seconded by Tony Stuart. It was approved with the necessary 2/3 majority. This is now our articles of governance.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Derrick Collins commended to the meeting the Sandwell Borough Council's study of the use of motorcycles, scooters and mopeds within the Borough. It contains useful statistics for other Councils considering transport policies.

#### DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT AGM:

This will be held on Sunday 24th October 1999 at the National Watersports Centre, Nottingham.

#### DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING:

Saturday 23rd January, commencing at 10.30 a.m. Becketts Island, Wythall, Birmingham.

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# British Motorcyclists Federation **News**

## BMF APPOINTS CHIEF EXECUTIVE

In a move designed to strengthen its position as the UK's top rider group, the BMF has appointed its first Chief Executive, Simon Wilkinson.

As Chief Executive Simon will have a major role in developing the BMF's services to its 140,000 members and will be a key player in the Federation's many lobbying activities, both with government and local authorities.

Traditionally a volunteer based organisation with only a small number of paid employees, the BMF sees the appointment of a full-time paid Chief Executive, (the first in its 38 year history), as essential in identifying ways of expanding membership still further and taking the BMF forward into the new millennium.

Simon, 39, brings a wealth of experience to the BMF. He comes from Nottingham First, the city's business promotions agency where he was Executive Director. Prior to that he was Head of Campaigning for the Shopping Hours Reform Council, successfully seeing through changes to the Sunday trading laws. Also experienced in sales and marketing, Simon could even be said to be a high-flyer - especially as he started his career as a Flying Officer in the RAF!

A real enthusiast who uses his Yamaha R1 as his preferred means of transport

(yes, even in winter!), Simon starts his new job immediately after Easter and will be based at the BMF's Surrey HQ. On taking on his new role Simon said: "I'm a very keen biker and to have a job where I can contribute something towards motorcycling through an established organisation like the BMF is fantastic. Just watch this space!"

## URGENT ACTION AT LOCAL LEVEL IS NEEDED NOW

- to ensure that PTWs (Powered Two Wheelers) are recognised and catered for in local transport plans.

### THIS IS A 'RIGHT TO RIDE' ISSUE

Every Local Authority in England and Wales, which has a Highway Authority responsibility, is currently devising a Local Transport Plan (LTP), which must be submitted to DETR before July 1999. That plan will describe the Transport

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facilities which the Council intends to cater for in your area in the year 2000/2001. In July 2000 the same Highway Authority will have to submit an updated plan, to deal with the years 2001/2005. Central Government will allocate funds based on these LTPs, and the priorities they describe.

Many draft plans of which we are aware at the moment, list priorities as encouraging Public Transport in all forms, and Walking and Cycling and discouraging the use of the private motor car, **but omit all reference to PTWs.**

If no reference is made to PTWs, NO provision will be made for them financially or practically and we could well find ourselves, as a group, even more marginalised than we are now.

**It is essential that YOU (and as many of your fellow local motorcyclists, club members, etc. as possible) write a simple letter to your local Authority requiring inclusion in the LTP of provisions for the use of PTWs.**

Address the letter to the Chief Executive of your Local Authority, head it clearly "Local Transport Plan" and ask to be notified of any Public Consultation Meeting due to be held locally. If there is one, do your best to attend and stick up for provision of facilities for PTWs.

If you want to ride into and in the 21st Century, **YOU must** take twenty minutes NOW to write a simple letter. Local Authorities tend to ignore centralised lobbying from pressure groups, but DO take notice of local voters.

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# picos de europa

## THE SECOND COMING! - PART ONE

### The Prologue:

The second trip to the Picos de Europa for myself "Punctures" Price, Dave "MSR Man" Dunn, and Paul "Lardy" Ludlow, eventually spluttered into life on the 3rd October this year when we boarded the "Pride of Bilbao" at Portsmouth at 20:00. This year we were joined by a guy we had never met before - Mick "How many K's?" Dallimore from Luton.

Mick had joined us late on. He had been desperate to go, and had even considered paying for a four berth cabin all by himself, just to guarantee that he went. He eventually managed to sneak in with us, because Mike Woodward, who had bought the tickets with some of his air miles allowance (thus saving us about 40 quid each - thanks Mike), had to pull out at the last minute due to pressure of work.

### THE TRIP

**Friday 2nd October 98:** I get stuck at work and have to stay later than I want to. Dalli is due to arrive at 17:30 ish and I don't get home until 18:00, so when I pull round the corner of St. Matthews Close, I fully expect to see his Landy Defender pulled up outside. It isn't so I immediately start to think the worst. Another panic stricken hour passes before I hear the throb of a 2.5 litre diesel outside. Sure enough, it is the little guy. He is tired from the drive down - snarled up in weekend traffic nearly all the way.

**Saturday 3rd:** We leave Devizes at 15:30 and arrive exactly 2 hours later at Portsmouth ready for check in. No problems on the way down - thank goodness - whatever else happens, you have to get to the boat. There isn't another one until the following Tuesday! While we are people-watching in the ferry terminal cafe, we spot the crinkly faced guy from the Jewson adverts (he also played Joe in the Royle Family on TV recently).

We embark very quickly and our vehicles are both very near the stern end of the ship, so we know we will be among the first off at the other end. The ship leaves the quayside at 20:08 into a grey Portsmouth evening and I feel like it has all now started proper. We spoil ourselves on our first night on the ship, we pig-out in the Bacchus Restaurant on Tapas and steaks and a couple of bottles of decent Rioja to wash it all down.

**Sunday 4th:** So far the crossing has been calm and reasonably sunny.

**Monday 5th:** "Pride of Bilbao" docks spot on, at 08:00 and we are on our way westwards along the Autovia in what seems like minutes. We pull in at a cafe somewhere near Santander.

As we come out of the cafe and give the bikes a cursory once-over, Dunner is

suddenly concerned about the state of his DR's gearbox sprocket. I should think so too. The last time I saw hooks like that, they had witches faces attached to 'em! He eventually finds a new one. Panic over, and the scholar of minimal maintenance has triumphed once again!

We head off along the motorway and after Unquera and the the usual zig-zig nightmare of the Hermida gorge, we arrive in Potes at 11:45. We say our "Hola's" to Francisco at La Cabana and after chatting to him for about an hour, get the bikes unloaded and our kit stowed in our rooms. We are ready to hit the trails at 15:00. The weather looks good so we decide that a good introduction for Mick is to take him over the top from Mogrovejo up to the Aliva Refugio and then on to the top cable car station at Fuente De.

After we remember that we have to turn left at the church in Mogrovejo, we are once again enjoying major fun on the uphill, especially the little drainage ramps. As we climb higher, the weather deteriorates and by the time we get to Aliva at 2000 metres, we are in cloud and snow patches. The XR has hesitated a couple of times on the way up and is, by now, getting a bit wheezy due to the altitude. I wind the airscrew in a quarter of a turn and the bike feels a fair bit better and smoother. The run round to the cable car top station is a bit dodgy to be honest, with plenty of snow and a few patches of ice. Mick braves the walk out onto the cattle grid viewing platform to peep over the 3000 foot sheer drop. Something I just can't do. I keep expecting it to snap off and vanish into the abyss!

A few Spanish tourists are wandering about at the top waiting for the next cable car to take them back down. You can see that they think we are mad to be up here in weather like this. Well it WAS fine when we set off. After we have had enough of the views, we head for somewhere a bit safer, so we back-track back to Aliva. The weather is now getting quite scary with the visibility decreasing by the minute and snow flurries getting stronger. Once we get back to Aliva, we shoot off like startled jack-rabbits down the twisty, rocky downhill to Espinama and the Bultaco mans cafe - the Hospedaje Sobrevilla. Saturnino and his missus Ernestina remember us from last year when Ludders kept running out in the rain to test his Pak Jak! 8 splendid cafe con leche's and a freshly made homemade tortilla later and we are ready to ride back on the road to Turieno, some 11 kms away.

Mick has been constantly asking how many K's we have done during this ride. He doesn't have a clue how far his KDX will go to a tankfull.

Anyway, we all make it back to La Cabana OK after our first little run. Although he doesn't say much, I think Mick can now see what all the fuss is about. Great rideable trails and stunning views (when the mist clears, that is!).

**Tuesday 6th:** We arise to the sound of tinkling rain. We kit up and head off to the supermarket for cheese, chorizo, nuts and chocolate for our midday picnic, but the weather looks like it is going to be bad all day with "nieve" (snow) forecast above 1800 metres. Never mind, we head out to Cosgaya for the track that takes you up over the top to the Bear monument at Mirador del Oso. By the time we get there it is sleeting quite hard and the normally marvellous panoramic views from this spot are merely a

dream. It is also getting cold, so we rattle off to join the road and make tracks for Llanaves de la Reina so that Mick can fill up again! We encounter heavy snow after Llanaves and decide that if we find a cafe in Portilla de la Reina we will stop for coffees and hope to warm up a bit.

Suitably warmed up, we fire up the scoots and head up the road towards Posada de Valdeon, to take the track over the mountains to Fuente De. The weather is by now looking really threatening, and to be honest I am feeling just a bit apprehensive. At least you know that if you can follow a jeep track, you can get down to safety. Goat tracks and other rather indistinct paths in the mountains are a totally different proposition! By the time we are at our highest point on the way to Fuente De, the mist is really clamping down, the snow flurries are getting heavier and the snow on the ground is getting deeper. We pass a Park Ranger in his 4x4 up on the top. His facial expression behind the misty windscreen shows us he thinks we are stark raving mad!

At last we start to drop down to the lower Fuente De cable car station where we fend off the begging mastiff-cross shepherd dogs and have a very wet picnic. After lunch there then follows the usual ride along the track that runs alongside the valley back to Cosgaya. Mick is starting to get the hang of the stony tracks. I decide I am going to be a bit conservative on this trip. I don't want to roll up at the RUH with a broken leg, especially if they are gonna cut-me-froat in a few days time! Mick the chocolate burglar, has eaten a whole bar of our picnic choccy, the crafty little so and so. (He did warn us that once he starts, he's got to finish). Definitely a chocaholic our young Master Dallimore!

I have been driven mad on the run back down the track. I keep hearing a tapping, tinkling sound that sounds like it is a cable or something flapping around. The number of times I nearly overshoot a corner while I am poking and prodding around trying to find the cause, I lose count of! Can't find it for days - it eventually turns out to be the little floating plastic wheel disc plate in the front hub of the XR600. Problem solved. Stop worrying you old twit! Just ride it!

We are back at the Pizza restaurant in the evening and lo-and-behold, in walks the Jock we had been speaking to earlier in Portilla de la Reina. A pleasant evening ensues. Jock (never did get his name) has managed to get digs really cheap in Potes for the night and recommends that we always investigate the "menu del dia" in restaurants, as it invariably is a three course meal and quite often includes wine, all for about 1000 - 1100 pesetas - about 4 to 5 quid! Good tip.

**Wednesday 7th October 98:** The weather forecast is awful, and the sounds coming from outside confirm our worst fears. It has been absolutely stair-rodging it down all night. All our gear is still damp-to-sopping wet from the day before. We decide to investigate the western end of the Picos by car. The idea is to treat it as a fact finding exercise to see if it will be possible to ride a loop out that way. The biggest obstacle being the lack of petrol stations for bikes with relatively small tanks.

Over breakfast, Mick declares that he has been "Ludded". He has finally given up trying to keep his room tidy, cos the pig-pen person has spread his belongings far and wide! It doesn't seem to affect their relationship tho', there are always great peals



of laughter coming out of their room at all hours of the day and night. A case of opposites attracting I suppose. They seem to get on like a house-on-fire, but Luds ought to take a bit more care about what he says about his mates when he is in an adjoining room with paper thin walls!

Breakfast over, we zero the trip meter in the Audi and head off for Oseja de Sajambre over the switchback mountain roads. It is 58 miles to Oseja, and no petrol stations on the way. We stop at a cafe in Oseja for coffees and a tough old bit of bread and raw cured bacon. Next we head into the Beyos gorge. What an awesome place. Much higher than the ramparts of the Hermida and very overpowering and threatening with huge cascades of water tumbling down the rock faces and slamming into the roads. Not surprising, considering the amount of rain we have had overnight.

I think we all feel a sense of relief when we come out of the gorge and make for Cangas de Onis. We spot 2 petrol stations in Cangas, but the mileage is now reading 95. We top up the Audi and head off up the mountains towards the Covadonga lakes, Ercina and Enol. What a climb this is. The mad cyclists have to do this as one of the stages in the Vuelta - The Tour of Spain. If they peg-out on the way up, there are plenty of buzzards and Egyptian vultures to pick their bones. We spot 20 or so, cruising around the peaks - almost like a flock of starlings!

After descending the way we came up, we again reach Soto de Cangas and hang a right to start off towards Arenas de Cabrales. By the time we have got there, the trip is reading 120 miles. 2 petrol stations. Panes comes up in 135 miles. Halfway back down the Hermida gorge, Dave and Luds want to have a look at the bottom end of the Tresviso track at Urdon. They beetle off up the track, and 5 minutes later the rain really starts to hammer down. They get back in the car about 15 minutes later, we still have half the Hermida to negotiate and the car is steamed up to the max! Makes the twisties even more interesting! The whole loop works out at 153 miles in total, and to be honest, a lot of the stuff over in the west is National Park and a bit sensitive. There are one or two interesting looking trails, but you have to go so far to have a go at 'em that I wonder if it's worth it. Potes still looks to be the best place to base your riding around.

*Vic Price, West Wiltshire TRF  
Part Two will follow.*

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# LARA NEWS

## TRAIL HIERARCHY TAKES ANOTHER TURN

Years of pioneering work by LARA in the Lake District National Park have reached a turning point.

It is four years since recreational vehicle users and the Lake District National Park Authority established a cautious alliance in an attempt to apply new thinking to the management of recreational vehicle use in the Park. The result is a detailed plan for trail route management which has been titled the Hierarchy of Trail Routes (HoTR) Initiative. The National Park Authority will support an experiment, from January 1999, to assess the effectiveness of the Hierarchy principle in eliminating problems associated with recreational green road driving and motorcycle riding in the Lake District.

For the next three years vehicle users will have the opportunity to take the HoTR initiative into another phase. Through a Trail Management Advisory Group (TMAG) made up of representatives from the many organisations which represent all of the various user and land manager interests in the Park the practicality of the HoTR theory will be put to the test.

Following the decision of the Park Management Committee, Geoff Wilson from Lazonby in Cumbria, who led the development of the initiative on behalf of vehicle users, said, "This is a major leap of faith by vehicle users. Non-vehicular user interests on the proposed TMAG will far outnumber vehicle users. The initiative will remain with the vehicle users, but the TMAG will be chaired by the Chairman of the Park Management Committee. We are hoping that the TMAG will assist recreational vehicle users to secure trail management solutions which will satisfy all parties in reasonable proportions".

### HoTR: PHILOSOPHY:

- That recreational vehicle use of minor highways is a lawful pursuit which requires proper management, like any countryside recreation or use.
- That use of 'hard position' reactive management generally fails to deliver sustainable levels of fairness, adherence and situation-improvement.
- That motor users must understand and acknowledge that there is a constantly changing hierarchy of sustainability inherent in 'trail routes'.
- Free of the threat of claim and counter-claim by other user groups, vehicle users will be given the opportunity to apply reasonable self-regulation on their own use of these ways.

### HoTR OBJECTIVES:

- To create a system of participant-agreed, authority-approved, jointly-applied management, flexible and responsive enough to control and anticipate

changing situations.

- To foster a high ethos amongst motorised trail users in their respect for the environment while they enjoy it.
- To show public bodies and private interest groups that such management is adequate to the task, and that draconian national, regional or local measures are not needed or justified.
- To create a model procedure which may readily be transported to and employed in many other regions in Britain.
- To establish a dynamic process, where review is an inherent feature, which accommodates the views of other users and landowners in evolving a Hierarchy which continues to be environmentally friendly.

#### **TMAG PURPOSES:**

- To advise the County Council and National Park Authority on the Management of routes used for green road driving in the Lake District National Park including the use of legal powers where necessary.
- To review the classification of routes in the provisional Hierarchy of Trail Routes and recommend changes, including advice to LARA on the desirability of seeking voluntary restraint by users on specific routes.
- To advise on priorities for action.
- To ensure that changes to the management of any route or group of routes are considered only after full consultation with relevant landowners, Parish council and user groups and where appropriate, to invite those to the meetings.
- To receive reports on the nature and effectiveness of action taken to manage use of routes and to advise route managers on future management.
- To share experience and opinions in recreational green road vehicle use.
- To review the effectiveness of the Hierarchy of Trail Routes Initiative in April 2001.

#### **TMAG COMPOSITION:**

Cumbria County Council (as Highway Authority); LARA, plus three further nominees to represent the interests of 4 x 4 users, motorcyclists and the commercial sector respectively; Cumbria Association of Local Councils; National Farmers Union; National Trust; Ramblers Association; British Horse Society; NPA Member; Country Landowners Association; Forest Enterprise; Friends of the Lake District; Cumbria Bridleways Society; NPA Voluntary Warden Service.

#### **TMAG MEETINGS & REPORTING;**

The Group will include, and be chaired by the Chairman of the Park Management Committee of the National Park Authority or the Deputy Chairman. Officers of the National Park Authority will service the group.

It will meet at least 4 times a year and a report of its deliberations will be given to the Park Management Committee after each meeting.

## **RoW NEWS**

### **CUMBRIAN RIDERS - WATCH OUT!**

Motorcycle trail riders using an ancient highway now recorded as a Byway open to all traffic, between the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales, face a new threat. A TRF member stopped on Breast High Road to chat with a walker, only to have the ignition key stolen from his motorcycle.

The thief identified himself as a local farmer. TRF records show that other riders have been threatened here, and fences have been erected across other local Byways (only to be replaced, following council complaints, by illegally narrow gates). The incident has been reported to the CLA-LARA Rapid Response Scheme.

In the above case, swift action by fellow riders ensured that the keys were recovered. Anyone riding or driving in the area south of Shap is asked to be careful lest they become stranded. This area is both isolated and exposed, and the prospect of leaving a vehicle on the fellside, and walking home in the dark, is causing some LARA members to rethink their Code of Conduct advice - 'always travel alone or in small groups'.

*Taken from LARA News*

### **PLANNING YOUR RIDE**

For everybody who rides motorcycles on the Public Highway in the UK this is important.

Bristol City, when under the control of the County of Avon, was the first city in the UK to allow motorcycles in bus lanes.

In the best tradition of a Unitary Highway Authority they are now attempting to deny rights to road users whether they live within the Authority or not (and it will all be done by the planners and the TRO process).

"Bikes\* in Bus Lanes" was one of the best things Bristol/Avon did for motorcyclists and is an example to the rest of the country (\*and we're talking motor bikes not push bikes!)

However, a document "Towards the Bristol Transport Plan" could have long term ramifications on motorcycling - because the planners just don't want to admit that PTWs (to use Euro-speak) exist. One sentence in a 16 page Summary Document mentioned the word - motorcycling - once...

In darkest Somerset, Mendip District Council (with Agency Agreement) are already promising to TRO a confirmed Byway before the Inspector's Decision Letter is published. A member of the Axe Vale Group attended the second PI inundated with alleged 'environmentalist and nature conservationists'. Apparently the car park was packed with gas guzzling luxury cars and the sort of 4x4s you see delivering the kids to school. But in my opinion it is a nationwide problem and the average TRF'er has got to get off his bike and bend the ear of his parish, district, county councillor and even MP if he wants to continue to ride!

*David Clegg*

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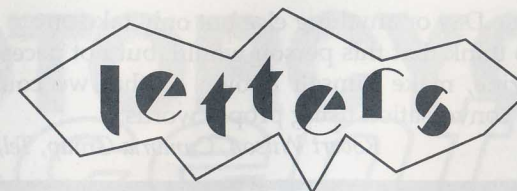
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## WHAT IF?

Sunday 28th March, Green Lane Day. There are a number of TRF members from the Cumbria Group working on the Long Sleddale side of Stile End Pass under the supervision of a Lake District National Park Authority Ranger. It's mid morning and there is a noise coming from further up the pass. In a short while over the hill come some trail bikes, all of which were travelling at a very sensible speed. It was a pleasure to see that they were using good sense but after the first 4 or so had passed this sweet feeling turned sour when it seemed that there were at least another 10 following. (There were I believe 13 in total). It was unfortunate that not one of the riders who had passed had made eye contact or greeted fellow users as they rode by. As the group was only travelling slowly and I was interested to know if they were all one group, TRF Members or what, I raised an arm of greeting, stopping one of them and so starting a conversation. At least that was what I thought:

"Hello, where are you from?"

"What the xxx has it got to do with you? (*usual expletives*). We have a right to be here. (*Strange I hadn't questioned his right to be there. There again I wouldn't as I know that two wheels as well as four wheels as well as two legs have a right to be there. Had this man a guilty conscience about being where he was or did he always attack everyone he meets in such circumstances?*)"

When asked if he was a TRF member there was a similar response using similar language and a suggestion that it was none of my business.

I believe that there were two groups travelling together by default, one from Lancs and one from Yorks and this person was with the Yorks group. WHAT IF I had been a walker or any other user, a National Park voluntary warden, a National Park Officer or a journalist who had no empathy with vehicular use of unscaled roads? It is not good for our cause when we, yes reluctantly I have to class him as one of us but I hope not, have amongst our ranks such as this. He could have undone more in those few seconds than many members of the TRF have achieved with many years of liaison with the National Park Authorities and others to keep these tracks open for us because he did not ask WHAT IF and show some tolerance. This type of behaviour belittles motorcyclists wherever we live. Does this person not realise that there are people out there who are looking for bullets to fire and will jump on anything as an excuse to curb our pastime? There are people in the National Parks and other authorities who have the power to make these bullets kill given half a reason. We all have an obligation to present our cause in a good light for the good of our future. Perhaps he should have been doing some liaison works repairing a track somewhere as opposed to abusing someone who was looking after his interests, although I suspect that he will be the type who will put nothing into the

system via Green Lane Day or anything else but only take out.

I should like to think that this person would, but not necessarily through the pages of this magazine, make himself known so that we could talk this thing through with proper conversation using proper words.

Robert Wilson, Cumbria Group, Tel/Fax: 01539 728565

## CLASSIFIED

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**HONDA XL200 PARIS DAKAR** 1984, electric start, IT175 tank, original ugly tank included as well, T&T. £550. Tel: 0118 988 7242 (Berkshire).

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