

GROUPS

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

BLACK COUNTRY Nick Hammond, Tel: 01384 221520
1 & 3 Tues, 9pm, *The Mitre, Church Road, Bradmore, Wolverhampton*

BRISTOL Jon Black, Tel: 01179 044 748
4th Mon, *Keynsham Rugby Club, Bristol Road, Keynsham*

CAMBRIDGE John Brooker, Tel: 01767 692805
1st Thurs, *Golden Ball, Boxworth*

CHESHIRE John Stansfield, Tel: 07899 844872
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: 01709 367332
2 & 4 Tuesdays, *The Angel Hotel, Sprinkhill, Eckington, Nr. Chesterfield, Derbyshire*

DEVON Rob Williams, Tel: 01626 364564
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 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 0191 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 Rob Latham, Tel: 01952 592324
2nd & last Wed, *White Horse, Shrewsbury*

SOMERSET Steve Hounsell, Tel: 01460 66452
Last Thurs, *The Bell Hotel, Currey Rivet, 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, *The Carrier's Arms at South Marston, Swindon*

SUSSEX Bevis Billingham, Tel: 01243 585128
Last Thurs, *Ashington 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, Troutbridge*

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



Patron: Lord Strathcarron

TRAIL

OCTOBER, 1999

No. 254

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

EDITOR: Fred Ellison.



Cumbria TRF at Mansergh. Photo by Roger Harris.

CONTENTS

Editor	3	Obituary	10
Chairman's Report 1999	4	Minutes of Exec. Meeting	11
Annual General Meeting	6	RoW News	15
PR Annual Report	7	The Wet & Wild of Welsh Wales	17
Dark Times on the Isle of Wight	9	Letters	21

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

TRF OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN	David Giles, 22 Ford Lane, Allestree, Derby, DE22 2EW. Tel: 01332 552288, E-Mail: davidgiles@dlgtraining.freeseve.co.uk
PUBLIC REL. OFFICER	Mark Holland, Corn Farm, Devauden, Chepstow, Monmouthshire, NP16 6NS. Tel: 01291 650240 (Weekends only).
MEMBERSHIP SEC.	John Pritchard, 8 Chantry Close, Bishop's Stortford, Herts., CM23 2SN. Tel: 01279 505343, Fax: 01279 501599, Mobile: 0385 373758, E-Mail: trfmemsec@aol.com
SECRETARY	Karen Wilson, 69 Nottingham Road, Trowell, Notts., NG9 3PJ. Tel: 0115 930 0414.
TREASURER	Alan Wilkinson, 29 Christopher Close, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9SA. Tel: 01529 460793, E-Mail: guzziwilk@tesco.net
EDITOR	Fred Ellison, Sheepcote Farm, Moor Lane, Wiswell, Clitheroe, Lancs., BB7 9DG. Tel: 01254 823893, Fax: 01254 887999, E-Mail: ellison@ukip.co.uk
DEPUTY EDITOR	Christine Higham, Bradmore, Whalley Road, Pendleton, Clitheroe, Lancs. BB7 1PP. Tel: 01200 424947.
RoW OFFICER	Richard Marshall, 1 Burlington Close, Breaston, Derby, DE7 3UB. Tel: 01332 873416.
BMF LIAISON OFFICER	Derrick Collins, 11 Grangewood Road, Wollaton, Nottingham, Notts. NG8 2SJ. Tel: 0115 928 2806.
KEEPER OF STATIONERY	Aelwood Finch, 8 Hallowell Down, South Woodham, Ferrers, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 5FS. Tel: 01245 329118, Mobile: 0374 471251.
DISPLAY EQUIPMENT CO-ORDINATOR	Jeff Ward, Jeff Ward Ltd., Gretton Road, Weldon, Northamptonshire, NN17 3HY. Tel: 01536 267036 or Fax: 01536 408787.
TRF MERCHANDISER	Rob Sawyer, 15 High Meadows, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 7RY.

TRF Website <http://www.trf.org.uk>

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The views expressed in 'Trail' are those of its correspondents and not necessarily of the editor or the T.R.F.

E D I T O R

Remember the front cover of September TRAIL? Lord Kitchener and 'Your Fellowship Needs You'? Well it still does. The '99 TRF AGM is on **Sunday 24th October**, this time at The National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham starting at 10.30 a.m. New officers are needed and good ideas are welcomed, as are ALL our members.

Its an exhilarating experience to ride your bike on ancient carriageways over hills, through rivers, between old stone walls and over open moorland and I for one intend to do so for a long time yet. However with the pressures being brought to bear by the antis who often see the countryside as a landscape created for their benefit alone it will be necessary to fight for the right to continue to do so and if you intend to continue trail riding well into the future maybe now is the time for you to think "What can I do to help?" Every little helps. Perhaps take up one of the executive posts which are vacant, represent the TRF on an access forum. Get to the AGM and see what is being done on your behalf.

If all this is impossible just make sure that you renew your membership and don't forget the Fighting Fund which is usually under pressure defending trail riding.

I know this is all a bit serious but with rights come responsibilities and one of our responsibilities is to preserve the green lane network for future generations to enjoy not something to hear and wonder about. Keep riding,

Fred Ellison

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members and new!*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 1999

At an Executive Meeting 18 months ago (issue 238 of TRAIL, June 1998) the TRF reaffirmed that the purpose of the TRF was 'To Maintain and Extend Legitimate Trail Riding' and it is with this clear focus on our Rights of Way work that the Executive has applied itself over the last 12 months.

Much of what is important is to be found in the detail, but here you will find my fellow Officers and I are laying out the broad picture of our activities over the last 12 months so that the time at your AGM can be better spent in questioning and discussion. There will be a need to find some new Officers and to find more Deputies to both share the load and to ensure continuity beyond next year.

You will see elsewhere in this bulletin that the Agenda for the AGM is ambitious in that it plans to deal with the reporting phase in the morning and to use all of the afternoon (if it goes to plan) in a participative debate about the future. It is the intention that everyone will have an opportunity to voice their thoughts.

A clear target for the Chairman this year has been to improve the nature of our meetings and to re-establish contact with Groups who have become estranged from our collective work in the Executive meetings of late. Meetings this year have started and finished on time and have followed a new format of using the

mornings to report ongoing business and the afternoons to explore through discussion groups the perceived way ahead. This has been well received and works well. Four Executive meetings have been organised for this year and four others are earmarked for 2000. Every effort has been made to publish a report of these meetings in the next available edition of TRAIL.

An innovation this year has been Regional Chairman's Meetings where all of the Chairmen, or their deputies, within a Region have been invited to meet with me as a representative of the Executive to discuss their concerns. Three such meetings have occurred, one in the South West, one in the North and the most recent in the South. The offer remains open to the East and West Midlands to join in the process. By invitation Tim Stevens has accompanied

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me to bring his breadth of awareness of the current RoW Scene to these meetings. The agenda has been drawn up on the day to cover the topics that those present wish to discuss. As a general rule we start with specific Group issues and then expand into Regional and National concerns. The pattern has been very similar on each occasion. A report of each meeting is available to anyone who wishes to see them.

Three Government Consultation documents, 'Rural England', 'RoW into the C21st' and most recently 'Improving RoW in England and Wales' have received a TRF response. Each one of them represents a great deal of work as has the (on-going) defence of half a dozen prosecution cases.

I am extremely proud of the truly democratic nature of the TRF which clearly states our purpose and how we conduct ourselves. In it's updated 1998 form the Constitution is explicit about our role, rights and responsibilities, and how the activities of the Organisation and its Officers are accountable to the Membership. Use it, use your democratic right! Ensure that each Group has two or three representatives at the AGM or if you are an independent Member that you represent yourself. It is your Fellowship.

David Giles

NOTICE BOARD

TRF Working Parties

There is a need for members to come forward at the AGM to volunteer for the following working parties. They are all tasks that need to be continued or initiated.

- Membership • Money • Handbook 2000 • Public Relations • Expert Witnesses • BHS Liaison • LARA Liaison • BMF Liaison • TRAIL production • Web-Site • Electronic Communication • Training • Other

Teeside and
North Yorkshire
Photographic
Competition
17th November 1999
Blacksmith's Arms,
Swainby

Teeside and North
Yorkshire AGM
17th November 1999

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

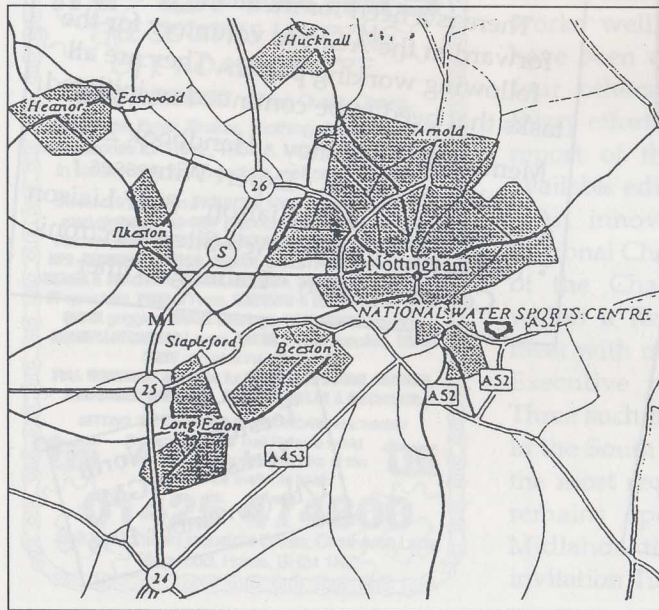
at THE NATIONAL WATER SPORTS CENTRE
HOLME PIERREPONT, NOTTINGHAM
SUNDAY 24th OCTOBER 1999

AGENDA

- 10.30 Chairman's Welcome
Declaration of Visitors
Apologies for Absence
Tabling of Any Other Business
Approval of the Minutes of the 1998 AGM
Matters Arising
Officers Reports
Election of Officers
Motions to the AGM
- 13.00 LUNCH
- 14.00 'The TRF Today' - by Steve Neville
A thought provoking introduction to an afternoon of delegate participation
- 16.00 Any Other Business
Date and place of the next AGM

DIRECTIONS FROM M1 MOTORWAY JUNCTION 24:

Distance from M1 Motorway to National Water Sports Centre is approx. 15 miles.



- Turn off M1 Motorway at Junction 24
- Follow signs for A453 Nottingham (South)
- After approximately 8 miles look for signs for A52 Grantham
- Follow A52 Grantham signs, until you see brown heritage signs for the National Water Sports Centre
- After leaving the main road and driving down Regatta Way
- Follow signposts for the correct area you require.

Yellow Socks and Green Lanes Annual Report - Public Relations

It is vital that those who affect our recreation have a favourable image of us and our activities. Otherwise all the laws, regulations, duties, powers, DoE circular 2/93, 'Making the Best of Byways', etc. count for little.

MEDIA - The countryside is in turmoil - farmers' incomes are tumbling... following the farmers'/landowners' groups portrayal of walkers with open access as ignorant, thieving vandals. Is this any way to treat your customers?

Now the media is full of fox hunting stories and 'the urban-rural divide'. For VRoW it has been a quiet year except for one story written by one of the antis' stooges and syndicated widely in newspapers and magazines.

It concerned CoCo's 'RoW in the 21st Century'. CoCo, in their next report "...Conclusions and Recommendations" write: "15. A great deal of interest was expressed in the issue of vehicular rights over paths (sic). Though stimulated partly by misleading press articles about our proposals..."

The Press Complaints Commission are joined by the Advertising Standards Authority in the ranks of the totally useless (see TRAIL July, p6&7).

Some of my effort is 'reactive' rather than 'proactive'. However, some attacks on us are best left because, for example, reply letters in the media often just remind people of the original attack.

EXHIBITION - attended BMF Show and Dirt Bike Show - thanks to the respective groups. Gloucester group stand at County PRoW Conference, and at BERA's Cirencester 2-day International Event.

I am always heartened to see the list of shows where the TRF stand is used. Please send your photographs and suggestions to me. Remember, we would like volunteers for the post of Display Equipment Co-Ordinator (TRAIL August p5).

READING/POSSESSION - Byway and Bridleway (0191 236 4086), Countryside Agency, Countryside Recreation Network, Country Landowner, various magazines - four wheel drive, motorcycling, walking, horse-riding, pedal cycling, country, etc. Various Ramblers' Association publications.

RESPONSES (to Consultation) - Glyndwr's Way National Trail in Powys, incorporating many untarred public carriageways (despite legislation stating: "... long distance routes... on routes which for the most part do not pass along roads used by vehicles").

CoCo's 'RoW in 21st Century' via LARA.

'Rural England' (DETR/MAFF).

Forestry Commission

'Access to Open Countryside' (DETR).

'Access to 'Other' Open Countryside' (University of Surrey/CoAg).

'Improving (sic) RoW' (DETR).

MEETINGS/CONFERENCES - TRF AGM, all Executive, all Gloucester Group, South-West region, Glos. RoW Liaison, Conference - Forum for Motorised Sport in Wales.

TRAIL RIDING - led Cornwall Group - 2 days, possibly one more; Wiltshire Group - one da

HORSE EVENTS - TRF Organiser for BERA's Cirencester ride - 1 day marking, 2 days riding; and for EHPS's Tintern Forest - half and 1 day. Helped others at Man v. Horse, Ludlow (twice) and Alfred's Tower.(Frome)

TRF MATTERS - Motion (now withdrawn) for AGM, review of complimentary TRAIL distribution, website assistance, etc.

INTERNAL LIAISON - various.

EXTERNAL LIAISON - LARA, BBT, BERA, EHPS, etc.

Thankyou to everyone for your support and fellowship. Please ask me if you need any help or advice. Your constructive suggestions are welcome. I would be pleased to hear from prospective successors.

Mark Holland, Hon. National Public Relations Officer (1995-)

P.S. Note revised address:

Corn Farm, Devauden, Chepstow, Monmouthshire, NP16 6NS.

Decoder:

- DoE Department of Environment - Govt. (defunct)
- VRoW Vehicular Rights of Way
- CoCo Countryside Commission - defunct 'quango'
- BMF British Motorcyclist's Federation
- PRoW Public Rights of Way
- BERA British Endurance Riding Association - horse
- Country Landowner - journal of CLASSOC
- LARA Motoring Organisations' Land Access and Recreation Association
- DETR Department of Environment, Transport and Regions - Govt.
- MADD Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food - Govt.
- CoAg Countryside Agency - quango, replaces CoCo
- EHPS Endurance Horse and Pony Society
- AGM Annual General Meeting
- BBT Byways and Bridleways Trust - independant charity. Also publishes journal 'Byway and Bridleway'.

DARK TIMES ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

It may come as a surprise to some members, but there is a full days trail riding to be had on our sunny Isle. And therein lies the problem, our lanes only present even the slightest of challenges after a drop of the wet stuff, and by that I mean rain of course. So, at one of our regular monthly meetings I put forward the idea of a night run, in the hope that it would transform the ordinary into something a little more entertaining. I should say that our lanes do possess some of the most marvellous views and on a sunny summer's day are a joy to behold, but you know how contemptuous familiarity can be.

Now this might not seem much of a deal, however, my bike is more than somewhat compromised by the laws of messers. Watt and Ohmn. It never ceases to amaze my MOT man that a 1986 KDX200 can manage to have a rear and brake light, a dip and main beam, as well as a horn that all appear to work when required.

On the morning of September 11th, I was last seen hastily zip tying a bicycle non flashing LED rear light to the rear mudguard of my bike, so that I would at least be able to find it if/when the engine stopped. I also fitted a 'new' rear sprocket, as recommended by team DSS, many thanks to Pete W. for that one.

Neil Linnet (XR600) was to lead a carefully planned route that would avoid habitation as much as possible, and we were joined by Dave Allsop (XR400) outside the White Lion pub at Arreton, where the temptation to enter was resisted to great effect.

I, as is usual, took up the rear. I can only assume that this procedure will eventually be TRF policy in respect of the correct treatment of 2-stroke riders.

We entered St. Georges Lane, which is an uphill sandy gully, through a tunnel of trees. What a transformation. Ruts, rocks and tree roots disappear at night, well, that is until you have hit them. Haste was quickly followed by caution. At the brow the lane becomes a wide gravel track running through the only working quarry on the island and adjacent to Newport Golf Club,

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which is built on land reclaimed after the gravel extraction.

Line astern we passed through the town of Newport to the start of the Tennyson Trail. All was well until we reached the first notable downhill section at the top of Brighstone. When I applied the rear brake, it effectively switched off my headlight! Now this I did not like. Lord Nippon Denso was rapidly achieving the same status as Lord Lucas in the prince of darkness stakes.

We have all heard of, or experienced, Cross-Rutting. I was now experiencing Unhappy-Rutting. How the bike stayed upright is a complete mystery to me. We eventually reached Freshwater Bay after Dave and I had a close encounter with a herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle that had been aroused by Neil's 600 barking at them! After doing some of the short lanes off the Military Road, we then retraced our steps along the Tennyson Trail, where it was a relief to be on familiar territory. On returning to Newport we then scattered to our respective homes.

Would I do it again? Of course I would. I had been to the brink and survived. Night riding on the trail can be very illuminating, as it complements my riding style, in that it requires absolutely no skill whatsoever!

Garry Stretch, RoW Officer, Isle of Wight Group

OBITUARY

BOB LAWLEY

Our thoughts have been with Jill, Jacky and Jenny since we heard the sad news. Bob Lawley died suddenly on Sunday 19th September.

Few of us will possess Bob's skills. As a rider it was often said he let the bike do the work and lesser mortals, as myself, could only stand and watch as he despatched the trickiest of climbs with ease. As a navigator, Bob was a legend, with the memory of an elephant, his own built-in GPS and a truly inspirational definition of a legal lane. Bob could lead any run and guarantee a splendid day for all.

Although I only knew Bob for a couple of years he was an instant friend, his easy going and jovial style making him universally liked and respected.

Big Bob - TOP BLOKE!

Chris Braznell, Black Country Group

Minutes of the TRF Executive Meeting held at: Becketts Island, Wythall (S Birmingham) on 4 September 1999

Present: As attendance book.

Welcome and Outline of the Day:

The Chairman, David Giles, opened the meeting and outlined the Agenda for today. The morning would be spent on TRF business and reports. The afternoon session would be given over to the DETR proposals for 'Improving Rights of Way in England and Wales'. All agreed to this timetable.

Apologies: received from: Fred Ellison, Keith Westley and Chris Higham.

Notice of Any Other Business: There was no other business

Approval of minutes of previous meeting:

These minutes had been printed in abridged form in TRAIL magazine. Derrick Collins proposed they be accepted. Seconded by Charlie Morriss. **Accepted.**

Matters arising:

The Chairman asked those who had actions from the previous meeting to update us on progress.

Training: Richard Hawker reported that he would be trying to set up a training day at the Worcester County Council Offices, and apologised for not getting this started. The South West Region would be carrying out training at their next Regional Meeting, but they are not very encouraged by the numbers interested. Richard Marshall reported that he will be setting up two sessions of training in the East Midland Area. He is planning a half day for newcomers on the basics of RoW and a full day at County Council office looking at historic documents etc. Hampshire reported they had done 3 talks on RoW plus run leaders advice.

The Chairman asked that all members present take back to their groups and Regions the need to promote training sessions.

Leaflets: John Gardiner and Keith Westley have produced a new leaflet which is now available, aimed at new members. The Chairman reported that the Handbook had been updated for this year and that a new Handbook would be issued for February 2000.

New Executive Officers Needed: The Chairman reminded the meeting that there will need to be new Executive Officers elected at this years AGM. The Treasurer has expressed a wish to step down. The Display Equipment Co-ordinator is not prepared to continue. The TRF Merchandiser is not prepared to continue. All members are asked to consider these and the other posts and put forward nominations as soon as possible.

LARA Report: Tim Stevens explained that the Vauxhall 4x4 club which had been reported at the recent LARA Meeting to be causing concern, are offering to help with lane maintenance. He went on to report that the Yorkshire Dales National Park is concerned about hooligan motorcycle riding on the lanes, and the TRF must be aware that this will cause them problems if it is not addressed.

Officers' Reports:

Chairman's Report: The Chairman explained that he had attended a Chairman's conference in Catterick, organised by the Northern Region. The day had been well received. He went on to issue an open invitation to meet with other Regions e.g. Wales, West Midlands, East Midlands. The Southern Region is to hold a meeting in October.

The Chairman reported he had met with the old Countryside Commission and had useful discussions. One point made was that the TRF is not winning the propaganda war, and he was concerned to mount a publicity campaign. Perhaps through the All Party Motorcycle Club at the House of Commons, other user groups and even possibly the antis. Discussion took place on how to get our message across in a fair and honest way. Dave Giles will draft the necessary letters to accompany the publicity material. Our Secretary Karen to create the distribution working party.

Secretary: Karen Wilson reported that since the last meeting she had received some more group returns. There are still one or two groups not responding. She explained that she had now received material from Jonathan St John including the Computer equipment.

The Chairman explained that Karen is heading a small committee looking into Membership to investigate whether

- a) Members are getting a fair deal
- b) The TRF as an organisation is getting a fair deal

Richard Hawker asked if any group returns had highlighted officers who are not members of National TRF. John Pritchard said they had and in these cases the people were contacted to explain that they are not members of the TRF.

Membership Report: John Pritchard said he would like to be involved with Karen's committee. The membership now stands at 2252 paid up, complimentary and life members. There had been 707 new members this year. He went on to explain that he feels we will lose some members as they appear to have a different perspective on what the TRF is all about. Discussion took place on the database and how it can produce improved information. Our Website has now been developed and the name TRF.org.uk has been registered.

Finance Report: The Treasurer circulated a brief finance return, reporting that we are more than covering our costs with the present membership fee. The projected budgets worked out by the finance committee are working very well.

The Norton Malreward fund can now be dealt with as we have paid the oppositions account, which has only just been received (their fees were £7500). The meeting agreed that refunds could be made only to those who ticked the box on the pledge forms. There would be a report in TRAIL, plus an article in Trail Bike Magazine.

Action: Alan Wilkinson

The Treasurer was concerned that there are 4 or 5 possible court cases coming through, which will need funds and the TRF needs to keep an eye on these.

Alan Wilkinson confirmed that this would be his final year as Treasurer.

Action: All members to identify possible candidates and ensure valid nomination.

Finance Sub-committee report: Jeff Ward reported that two items had exceeded budget:

Officers expenses - where capital items were mixed up with out of pocket costs & Miscellaneous printing costs which seem to be excessive. There is a need for someone to be appointed to sanction new printing, as this is being done in an ad hoc way at present. Mark Holland felt that the Keeper of Stationery should be keeping an eye on this. Concern was expressed that Aelwood had not attended any executive meetings for a long time

Action: Dave Giles to contact Aelwood Finch

Mileage expenses: Jeff Ward reported that the committee had looked at this and proposed a mileage fee of 25p per mile. Richard Hawker proposed we accept this rate, seconded by Ron Carter. Carried by show of hands.

At this point the Chairman invited the meeting to discuss the motion put forward by Mark Holland to the AGM.

The Chairman explained the background: the concerns which led to this motion were first expressed at a meeting of the South West Region's Chairmen. It was dangerous to charge run fees as it laid the Group open to claims against them in the case of an accident. There had also been confusion as to whether members who only pay group membership fees were TRF members. They are not and will find themselves disenfranchised if they need TRF backup for a court case, etc. There was also concern from the Finance committee that group accounts need to be logged at National level for Auditing purposes. John Pritchard felt there was a need to separate the two issues here. One of membership and the other of accountability. The group monies need to be logged for auditing, but not taken from the group.

Jeff Ward re-iterated his original request for group membership returns to include accounts in order that the TRF can legally and properly audit its accounts.

It was felt that Marks' motion would be divisive for the TRF and the current constitution already covers what Groups have to do within the TRF. Accordingly after discussion with Jeff Ward, Mark withdrew his motion

The Chairman asked the meeting for their thoughts on a way forward. The meeting agreed that these issues need to be pursued. The Chairman was prepared to draft a couple of articles for TRAIL. This was agreed.

Action: Chairman to write articles for TRAIL.

RoW Report: Richard Marshall reported that Roger Bailey's records had gone to Jeremy Atkinson. He updated members on the court cases pending. The offer from Tim Stevens to be an expert witness was felt to be unsuitable as he is a member of the TRF. Tim has suggested an alternative who is independent. Richard reported that all these cases will cost money and we need to keep an eye on the expenditure. The DETR paper 'Improving Rights of Way in England and Wales' is a concern to trail riders. There have been meetings with other user groups at the LARA headquarters, where everyone agreed that the proposals wouldn't work for most users, except perhaps the landowner. Even the Ramblers view is the same as ours. This afternoons session would cover this in more detail.

BMF Liaison Officer: Derrick Collins circulated his report and also reported that the BMF had been involved with Tesco stores selling Mopeds.

Afternoon Session – DETR proposal – Threats, Opportunities

Richard Marshall outlined the proposals in the DETR paper and expressed concern on how it will effect the users. He suggested the meeting form groups to discuss the most important points in the document. 4 groups then went into session:

Group 1: Discussed the proposal that there should be a 10 year cut off point for documentation and historic evidence to be produced. Charlie Morriss headed this group which was concerned that the document does explain what they mean by historic documents. There had been no consideration of the costs of the legislation proposed when lack of resources was already a problem with RoW. The 'Right to Roam' will almost certainly create another resource problem. Also what triggers the proposed 10 year limit? And there appears to be no time limit put onto completing claims.

Group 2: Discussed RUPPs to Bridleway proposal. Tim Stevens headed this group which listed the possibilities of what to do. The alternatives could include: Do Nothing, RUPP to Byways, 'New Byway' as a category, Make HAs reclassify RUPPs, especially before sale of property, Weight, Width or speed limit and perhaps gates where appropriate. The optimum situation for the TRF would be for RUPPs to be reclassified as Byways and for the Landowner with his superior resources & access to Deeds—Estate Maps, etc to claim if they believe the classification to be in error.

Group 3: Discussed UCRs and how to deal with them. Richard Marshall headed this group and felt that UCRs should be Byways because they are easier to manage if they are on the Definitive Map, controlled if necessary by Weight restrictions as in the Isle of Man. UCRs have presumption of vehicular unless landowner can claim a mistake has been made. Public Inquiries by written evidence only, not by attending personally. This would mean no advantage can be had by having a Barrister available. Current decisions are made by

ected Councillors, this should be done by the Authorities Officers who know the cases better.

Group 4: Discussed viable alternatives to legislation and publicity. This group was concerned that as many members as possible should be aware of what is going on. There should be a bullet point response sent to other consultees in case they don't realise the importance of the proposals for users. Also need to formulate viable alternatives for legislation. Concern was also expressed that MPs do not seem to know about this Consultative paper as it came out during the summer recess. Members need to see their own MP about this.

Actions.

- All members to write to their own MP, DETR and Secretary of State Meacher (Guide notes from TRAIL)
- Background paper to be produced by Richard Marshall
- Articles in TRAIL to jog members into action
- All groups to lobby MPs. Take briefing notes with them
- Lobby Councils ref their liaison groups. Also concerns about the increase in work load problem for the Authorities and for volunteers
- Consider a demonstration outside the House of Commons when the document comes before Parliament.

Action: Dave Giles

Any Other Business:

The Chairman confirmed he would commence a publicity campaign starting with approaches to the All Party Motorcycle Club and other user groups. Perhaps follow up to the antis.

John Pritchard thanked the TRF for their support of his court case which will have a hearing on 8 September 1999. He hopes it will be cleared up soon.

Date & place of Next Executive Meeting: 4 December 1999 at Beckett's Island, Wythall, at 10.30 am.

RoW NEWS

MORE HAMPSHIRE TROS?

Following the proposed TRO of a narrow BOAT to all bar hikers (see Holloway Horror... B&B 1999/6/39), Hampshire County Council is now consulting on another BOAT TRO, this time at Wheatham Hill, Froxfield. Old Litten Lane (BOATs 46 & 34) runs, for a short distance, close to the edge of an ancient "disused pit" just to the south-west of Wheatham Farm. The county council regards this length as "a danger to all users" and proposes to prohibit all traffic for this stretch. The rest of Old Litten Lane will then have a "no motor vehicles" TRO, with a "permissive section" for non-motor traffic only, bypassing the "dangerous" section. Local trail riders, distressed that once again they are being made to suffer for no fault of their own, point out that there is evidence that the line of the proposed "permissive path" (currently

part of footpath 28) is probably the original through-line of Old Litten Lane anyway.

NO DRIVING

Cambridgeshire County Council has made an omnibus prohibition of driving TRO for no fewer than 14 BOATs in 8 parishes. The prohibitions - enforced by locked gates, will apply to horse-drawn vehicles, but not to pedal cycles.

A DELIGHT - IT'S RIGHT!

A consultation arrived in August from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. The landowner of the former Maesgwyn Opencast site at Banwen has applied for authorisation to install a cattle grid and bypass gate on BOAT 39. Users observe that if the job can be done right in Neath Port Talbot, it rather begs the question why so many BOATs are festooned with unlawful gates the length and breadth of the land.

FIRST CHOOSE YOUR TRIBUNAL

An interesting consultation arrived in August from Buckinghamshire County Council. An application has been received to divert part of bridleway

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16 Ibstone. No problem, except that bridleway 16 is also the U656 Grays Lane. Being ever pragmatic, BCC had opted to go for the diversion in the magistrates court under s.116, rather than use s.119. But the application was by the landowner and, of course, under s.116 the only ground for diversion is "... nearer or more commodious to the public." We called BCC to enquire (having no view on the merits), only to be told that the local Ramblers' Association had already spotted that and objected. The diversion will not now proceed to order stage.

Alan Kind

IMPROVING RIGHTS OF WAY

In the September Issue of TRAIL we are asked to write to our MPs about the above document. But I am unsure as to what exactly to write. It would help if someone were to list the points we should make for us to paraphrase in our own words. For those of us who wish to see the document it is also available on Internet at: <http://www.countryside.gov.uk>.

It is alarming to see in their conclusions from the comments they received the statement "A great deal of interest was expressed in the issue of vehicular rights over paths. Though stimulated partly by misleading press articles about our proposals, the strong - and divergent - response was, nevertheless, an indication of the feeling that exists. The antipathy shown towards any motorised use (irrespective of its legality, scale or impact) is significant".

The opposition from the Country Landowners Association can be seen on their website at: <http://www.cla.org.uk>. It is interesting to note that the CLA state that their 50,000 members own 60% of the countryside. In other words 0.09% want to dictate what the rest of the population can and cannot do in the 60% of our countryside that they own. Again in their own words: "A fundamental belief of the CLA is that farmers and landowners are the people best suited to manage the countryside and deliver the rural environment that everyone wants." To do this they are proposing very detailed changes to the law which will be to their benefit. Add that to the Ramblers Association aims and we really do need to lobby our MP's and all others who can help us in our fight.

Eric Haworth



THE WET AND WILD OF WELSH WALES

There has been some ongoing banter between a pre-eminent RoW activist from Gloucester and some of the more hardy members of Southern Group ever since a ride in Wales at the beginning of this year. The subject of this repartee was the absence of the author from the party that braved the wet wilds of Welsh Wales. The fact that he has more sense than to ride in such a place, at such a time of year, when all views are veiled in mist and wet and cold under garments were assured, had escaped the cognisance of those involved. You cannot put a wise head on young shoulders.

In the fullness of time a return visit was arranged, albeit during a season where the chance of more clement weather was a little greater -at the end of August. I had the good fortune to travel in the company of our group Chair and Secretary - both honourable young men whose considerable energies and talents are channelled to the betterment of Southern Group.

It was on the Gloucester bypass that we espied, some way in front, a couple of other Southern Group members, who, by coincidence, had planned a similar weekend and were staying at the same hotel. This choice of accommodation coincided due to the fact that all had been there before, and having not been ejected or debarred, considered it safe to return. To break our journey our party stopped in Crickhowell for refreshment and upon emerging from a coffee shop (liar) caught sight of the other Southern Group conveyance, who, it transpired, had not stopped. I made note that instruction on map reading should be imparted at some forthcoming club night.

Once all were assembled at the hotel we decided, over a cup of tea (liar), that comestibles of the highest standard should be sought by way of entertainment for that evening. Alas there was not an Indian restaurant within striking distance and so we returned to Crickhowell.

It was during this journey that our extensive knowledge of highway law was called into play, along with those skills honed over numerous interactions with vociferous and ill-informed landowners. There is now one Volvo driver who will think twice before carving up a white van with erudite TRF members as passengers. The meal, taken at the Vine Tree, was extremely good value and of a quality in excess of many establishments that charge several times that which we paid. The quality of service was also to be commended (Hmmm, you can say that again). The quality of the tea and coffee also had a most uplifting effect upon the entire company.

Back at the hotel the conversation ran on into the night as we enjoyed the conversation of some young walkers who joined us in the large communal room. Well, that is to say that some of our number remained thus engaged. Sadly a couple of the younger members of our party were overcome by the exertions of

travel and retired early.

Saturday dawned bright and clear (for some) and our leader arrived. It transpired that all riders were prepared to join as one in the quest for Llandoverly. On one of our early lanes our progress was curtailed whilst a group of four wheel drive enthusiasts negotiated a narrow section between two trees. We were more than compensated for this delay by a charming entertainment provided by one of their female number who was, toward the end of her display, clad in little but a pale blue G string. She resided, quite aptly, in Bristol. It couldn't get any better, and it didn't

At a distance of ten miles, according to my mount's odometer, we encountered the first technical section. It was no more than four metres in length, but involved a considerable drop into about 0.6m of water with a rocky exit. It is with considerable joy that I can report the fact that our leader was unseated. It is with even greater mortification that I report attaining two boot-fulls of water in my turn. It is with considerable chagrin that I report the fact that DR350s are not fully waterproof and do not run at all well whilst submerged. There was, however, no unseemly haste by the rest of the party to enter the river and lift the bike from the rider. That said, we were fortunately spared the necessity of arranging a lottery to discover which unfortunate should administer resuscitation.

In retrospect the time passed reasonably swiftly whilst someone rode in to Brecon to purchase a spanner to remove the spark-plug in order to assist extrication of that part of the river trapped within the DR's innards. (owners of imported DRs check spanner fits plug) It is in this vein that the day continued. Some superb lanes, but some, I personally feel, would have been better left for the younger and fitter rider.

Thus it is with regret that I have to admit that after just 41 miles of carrying, pushing, dismantling and reassembling our bikes I expressed my feelings quite forcefully to our leader, who was clearly not accustomed to being thus addressed by a chap without rank. Whether my ill-temper had any influence I cannot tell, but from this point the lanes were indeed more rideable. Greatly refreshed with coffee and cake (true this time) in Llandoverly we headed back towards Talgarth taking in many more scenic lanes.

Our revered Chair, being a little bored with the more sedate pace, attempted the occasional trials manoeuvre. One such manoeuvre, alas, proved to be just a tad beyond his skills. The skill in this instance being that one should carry out some form of risk assessment prior to initiating the stunt. Personally I would have avoided trying to pop the front wheel up onto a tree where, in the event of failure, there was little to arrest a considerable fall, other than fresh air. I will admit to having forgotten this little episode, but received a timely reminder from one of our number. Odd that he should remember that incident and then forget to remind me that he entered into an involuntary competition with his machine to see who could reach terra firma first where the main terror was the lack of firmer, other than deep

wet clay.

It is with amazement that I must report the short memory span of another of our party, who, hitherto I considered to be the intellectual giant amongst us. (This I assert with confidence, as he can ask for refreshment in a dozen or more languages, then add 'and my friend will pay'.) Having seen the consequence of laying a DR350 on its side in deep water my good chum defied credulity by performing a similar experiment with his XR400. Time, by now, was indeed pressing as we were all aware that the coffee shops were open and in need of our custom - such is the desperation of the rural economy.

Our late return to the hotel dictated we ate there, if we were to eat at all, and abandon plans for a taste of the orient. I may have been outspoken during the day on the arduous nature of many of the routes used, and I may have suffered, but I at least had the good grace to stay awake at the dinner table!

Sunday breakfast was interrupted by a telephone call from Russ, who had slipped away the previous afternoon to gorge himself on Chinese food and spend the night in the arms of his dear wife in Abergavenny. It was with considerable regret, he informed us, that his mount had been taken ill during the night with a broken clutch lever. The good hearted souls in our company were all willing to ferry a spare part to him but he said that we were too kind and that it was inequitable that we should be put to so much trouble, and that he would sacrifice his enjoyment in order that we might increase our own. (Hangover?)

The pace was more within the capabilities of my ailing XL185 on Sunday. We rode some wonderful lanes with superb views and significant historic interest. One outstanding road, being the old road from Builth to Brecon as recorded by Ogilby in the 17th century, retains its milestones across the open moorland. It was up there that we watched a shepherd move many hundreds of sheep, commanding his dogs by use of his vehicle horn.

We all gained the far bank of our first ford of the day with dry boots but I fear that the vocal expression of my enjoyment of the ensuing ascent was misplaced in view of the presence, in the middle of the way, by the occupier of a rural retreat abutting the lane. Nevertheless a brief, but comprehensive, account of the law related to Definitive Maps and public rights had his female companion chuckling and the old toff spluttering. Our leader proffered a TRF leaflet that showed his name and address and we left for lunch in Builth Wells.

The lanes that followed that afternoon were the sort of ways that trail riding is about. Rideable, although not without the occasional test of skill. One steeply climbing lane springs to mind. The surface was worn rock and the 'finish', a 0.6m step onto the sealed highway. Despite my advanced years I'm pleased to relate that I rode my own sick and misfiring mount up this superb lane, if you catch my drift!

At the crest of one unclassified road, that climbed through bracken with panoramic views of the Wye valley, we met with an old farmer. He was quite generous with his knowledge of local roads, pointing to some that our guide

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suspected as being public but had not gathered sufficient evidence to assert the right and use. It was up here that we saw a pair of kites, buzzards being a regular sight.

All good things come to an end and all too soon we were leaving Talgarth on the main road back to the hotel. And what an excellent way to finish. A long series of sharp bends climbing for what seemed like for ever.

But was the weekend really over? Sunday evening, as we made our way down to Abergavenny to collect Russ Mike commented on how well the truck had performed during the trip - but he spoke too soon. As our stay in Abergavenny was not oriented toward trail riding I shall exercise an authorís discretion and spare you the details. To say that the script writers for Men Behaving Badly have only scratched the surface is a fact. To say that the weekend was enjoyable would indeed be an understatement.

Mike Hannigan, Russ McDermid, Karl Mumford, Keith Maslin, Patrick Shaw and our most excellent guide, Charlie Morris, thank you for your company. I shall return, but possibly next time on the road bike, as the main roads are absolutely excellent also.

Dave Tilbury

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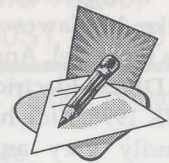
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I was interested to read the article by Paul Atherton criticising the TW200. Having reached my dotage or anyway fifty-three years, and having given my XT350 to my son in law as he is bigger than me just like the XT is, I wanted a smaller lighter bike. I recently contacted Tokyo Trail at Bechton as Paul did and asked for a TW200. They refused point blank to sell one to me unless I was planning to take it to my villa in Portugal and ride it on the beach. As I don't have a villa in Portugal and the nearest I would get to the beach is a wonderful trail on the Isle of Man, I went to see Bechton Motors and bought a Honda SL230. They again said don't touch a TW as it does not grip even on wet grass. So at least Paul, they seem to have learned from your experience. I'm very pleased with the SL230 and although top end speed is a bit limited, it has enough grunt to pull my bulk up some very steep bits and is light enough for me to pick up when I fall off which is quite often. The greatest asset is the electric start, which, when I have just managed to pull the bike upright sweating and swearing and am trying to stand upright, is about the greatest invention known to man, except women of course but ...

Paul Ginns

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