

GROUPS

AXE VALE Malcolm Preece, Tel: 01275 844757
2nd Mon, The Star, Star (A38), Nr. Shipham, Somerset

BLACK COUNTRY Nick Hammond, Tel: 01902 700749
1 & 3 Tues, 9pm, The Mitre, Church Road, Bradmore, Wolverhampton

BRISTOL Paul Andrews, Tel: 01179 659255
4th Mon, Keynsham Rugby Club, Bristol Road, Keynsham

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

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

CUMBRIA Anthony Hayhurst, Tel: 01539 721115
2nd Tues, Derby Arms Hotel, Witherslack, Nr. Kendal

DERBYSHIRE & SOUTH YORKSHIRE
Kevin Marsh, Tel: 01246 811949
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 Mark Way, Tel: 01258 451397
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. Snaitth

ESSEX
Dave Anderson, Tel: 01277 657783
2nd Wed, The Swan Public House, Great Eastern, Nr. Dummow

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 Paul Roberts, Tel: 01992 579583
2nd Thurs, The Old Guinea, Ridge, Near Potters Bar

HIGH PEAK & POTTERIES
Simon Lowe, Tel: 01298 70680
1st Tues, Black Horse at Endon (A53, about 3 miles west of Leek, Staffordshire) & 3rd Tue, Cheshire Cheese, Buxton

ISLE OF WIGHT Andrew Hawkins, Tel: 01983 617232
1st Wed, The Eight Bells Inn, Carisbrooke, 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 Paul Vernon, Tel: 01522 889079
4th Thurs, The Dog & Bone, John Street, Lincoln

LODDON VALE David Cook, Tel: 0118 901 4481
2nd Thurs, Inn in the Park, Woodley Centre, E. Reading

NORTHUMBERLAND Chris Moody
Tel 0191 387 3507 6-10pm or 0860 302001 (mobile)
1st Tues, 8pm, The Swan Inn, Heddon on the Wall

NORTH WALES Richard Hughes, Tel: 01244 533855
1st Wed, Capenhurst Social Club, OS 116 371 740

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

PEAK DISTRICT Neil Walker, Tel: 01788 811919
1st Thurs, 8pm, Travellers Rest, Ashbourne Road, Derby

RIBBLE VALLEY John Hargreaves, Tel: 01254 721897
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
2nd Thurs, The Bell Hotel, Currey Rivel, Nr. Taunton

SOUTHERN Russ McDermid, Tel: 02380 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

SUFFOLK Richard May, Tel: 01787 374073
Last Wed, Manger Pub, A134 Sudbury Rd, Bury-St-Ed.

SWINDON Keith Owen-Bines, Tel: 01793 751129
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 Laurence John, Tel: 01494 872700
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
Alan Yandell, Tel/Fax: 01225 864187 Mob: 07989 127093
1st Tues, The Bell On The Common, Broughton Gifford

WORCESTERSHIRE
David Gunster, Tel: 01905 452742 Mob: 07970 919790
3rd Tuesday, The Fox at Bransford, Worcs.



Patron: Lord Strathcarron

TRAIL

APRIL, 2001

No. 272

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

EDITOR: Fred Ellison.



Splash Down!

Photo by Roy D. Taylor, Richmond, North Yorkshire.

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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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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.

EDITORS

I feel like an ex-trail rider with all this foot and mouth but I'm proud to be a TRFer. I haven't heard of one report of anyone ignoring our self imposed ban and if any GLEAM or other anti-trail riding organisation or person is reading I would like to point out that there is no legal requirement for us to give up riding UCRs and BOATs. It is trail riders showing respect for the needs of the countryside and consideration for the people who make their living there. Something we always try to do and intend to carry on doing in the future.

For those who are getting desperate to fire up the old steed I'm told that KTM have given up their organised rides but have arranged training schools in a non affected area. They offer training schools for the inexperienced, a School of Experience for the more serious and established rider and a KTM Off-Road Experience which gives people the opportunity to find out what the fuss about riding off-tarmac is all about. These sessions can be turned into a full weekend if desired. If you are interested give them a ring on 01752 840831.

Last but by no means least, many thanks to all who contribute to TRAIL. We always need photographs, letters and articles be they a few lines or a few pages. I hope you have enjoyed the serialisation of the excellent Picos de Europa by Vic Price. It made me feel like I was there! I wish! Final part this month.

Fred Ellison

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

My first and enjoyable task is to thank everyone for the verbal and written support, which has been received from all quarters for the new executive team. You can rest assured that we are, as a team, committed to progressing the interests of the TRF. I would like to confirm that I also wish to pursue the alliance with other organisations that have an equal interest to ours in preserving rights of way albeit that the securing of these rights will take a considerable time in terms of research.

The Foot and Mouth outbreak is a tragedy for all but particularly those whose livelihood is dependent directly or indirectly upon the rural economy. The TRF is committed to playing its part in restricting access to the countryside until the possibility of spreading the disease has been removed. Naturally I will write again to all group reps when the moratorium is to be lifted.

In the mean time it may be appropriate to see what we can do to make use of the time we now have whilst our favourite pastime is suspended. I have already referred to the need for research. As a first step we are going to need groups to collate the information they have on the lanes which they already ride. Can I therefore ask that the RoW officers of individual groups start to draw together this information. This is the first part of the research exercise i.e. we must establish what we already know about the lanes we currently ride. I fully accept that in some cases this may be very little, but if we don't audit the knowledge we have, we run the risk of carrying out research which will be a duplication of effort and wasteful in terms of people's time and money, particularly if we pay individuals to do this work. At this stage I am only asking for RoW officers to identify what information is available in their groups. When this information is available, please contact Dave Tilbury in the first instance. His contact details are in Trail.

Since I am new to the job one of the recurring aspects which have been brought forcibly to my attention, in the last few months, is the need to create more understanding for the objectives of the TRF. Those who suggest that ridding the countryside of the TRF will remove a troublesome and, some may say, unacceptable invasion are misguided. Attention drawn to bad motorcycling in the countryside is often the result of indifferent and reckless behaviour perpetrated by those who are not members of the TRF.

This is something which the TRF abhors.

My assertion is that a great deal of harm is done to the reputation of TRF trail riders by those who have no interest in adhering to a countryside code of conduct. Those in the TRF have agreed to abide by a code which respects the rights of all interested parties in preserving a cherished heritage.

Should the TRF be stopped by whatever means, then be sure that this will not act as a deterrent or restriction on those who have always ignored any code of conduct. Secondly newcomers to the pastime will have no one or organisation from whom to learn and benefit in respect of the conscientious approach to trail riding which has been a hall mark of the TRF and a fundamental part of its being. The TRF performs a valuable function in organising orderly access to the countryside. What has to be addressed is a easy means of recognition by other trail and countryside users of TRF members from those who disregard any form of code of conduct and who I would class as no better than 'Joy Riders'.

With your help and enthusiasm we will make progress

Andre Confavreux

National Chairman

P.S. I have asked the Editor to reproduce the code of conduct (see below), which will help to remind all of some of the finer points of trail riding behaviour.

THE TRF CODE OF CONDUCT

Use Only Vehicular Rights of Way

Trail riding is only lawful on public roads. If in doubt, check with the Highway Authority or the TRF. Motorcycles and riders must be road-legal.

Green Lanes are subject to the same laws as surfaced roads.

Keep To The Defined Way Across Farmland

Wheels can damage crops and grass. Wandering from the road onto farmland or moorland is trespassing. If in doubt, ask.

Give Way To Walkers, Horses And Cyclists

- as a courtesy. On narrow lanes, stop and switch off engines.

Fasten Gates To Safeguard Stock

- except those tied open for farming purposes. An open gate invites animals to stray, endangering themselves, crops and traffic.

Travel At A Safe Speed

Ride at a reasonable speed, taking regard of conditions and visibility.

This should not exceed the voluntary maximum of 25mph.

Ride Quietly

Machines must be effectively silenced.

Use the throttle with discretion as noise can offend.

Honour The Country Code

Respect the countryside and those who live, work and play in it. Green lanes can be valuable habitats, so take special care in spring and early summer.

Identify Yourself

Carry your membership card with you when trail riding, so that you may identify yourself as a current member of the TRF - and display a current membership sticker.

NOTICE BOARD

GREEN LANE DAY 2001 POSTPONED

Green Lane Day 2001 was scheduled for 25th March. It has now been postponed and re-listed for 21st October 2001.

NEW PHONE NUMBER

The contact number for the display equipment is now the same as the holding address - 01325 463815.

Leo Crone

NEW COUNTRYSIDE ACT WORKSHOP

Teesside & North Yorks Group are holding a LARA Workshop on the new Countryside Act on July 15th at North York Moors visitor centre, Sutton Bank, near Thirsk. Starting 10.00 a.m. to finish 4.30 p.m.

Alan and Tim in attendance to guide us through the minefield that this Act is.

A fee of £5 is being charged to cover our expense and hopefully raise some funds. Numbers are limited so first come, first served. (Who knows, if we get enough interest we may hold two).

Contact Leo Crone on 01325 463815

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This web site contains the whole of England using the Landranger series of maps.

Frank Kitching

Kiss Me

In these dark and gloomy days, perhaps, a little something to brighten our sad existence.

A man was crossing a road one day when a frog called out to him and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess."

He bent over, picked up the frog and put it in his pocket.

The frog spoke up again and said,

"If you kiss me and turn me back into a beautiful Princess, I will stay with you for one week."

The man took the frog out of his pocket, smiled at it and returned it to the pocket.

The frog then cried out,

"If you kiss me and turn me back into a Princess, I'll stay with you and do anything you want."

Again the man took the frog out, smiled at it and put it back into his pocket.

Finally the frog asked,

"What is it? I've told you I'm a beautiful Princess, that I'll stay with you for a week and do anything you want. Why won't you kiss me?"

The man said, "Look, I'm a trail rider. I don't have time for girlfriends, but a talking frog is really cool."

Paul, Herts TRF

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RoW NEWS

FROM THE NATIONAL RoW OFFICER SECTION 56 CASE IN NEWCASTLE

A year ago, by the use of the 1980 Highways Act section 56, a TRF member took Newcastle-Upon-Tyne City Council to the Magistrates Court for their failure to properly maintain a heavily-used minor road, with wide but impassable verges and a narrow tarred centre section, close to the village of Dinnington and near to Newcastle Airport. The magistrates duly found against the City Council and made an order that the road be repaired. Rather than then get on and do their statutory duty, the City Council appealed against the decision to the Crown Court. The Judge, sitting with 2 Magistrates, found that parts of the road were out of repair but allowed the appeal - with costs against the aforesaid TRF member, who had brought the case as a private individual.

Although on the face of it this not a particular road in which the TRF has much interest at all, the implications of this judgement could be very detrimental to us in future. The Executive has therefore decided to offer some financial support in taking the matter to appeal by way of case stated to the High Court. As the case has even more serious implications for other RoW users, such as walkers, cyclists and horseriders, appeals are being made to their national bodies for further support.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF OTHER AREAS?

Just over a month ago I was invited to attend South Wales TRF Group's monthly meeting to brief them on the

new CRoW Act and talk about how they should go about organising RoW research. One good suggestion made by a member was that I should make an appeal through this column for everyone, and especially long-serving members who have moved to a different part of the country, to ask themselves what information they might have that would be useful to other Groups - such things as run records, old papers and any research they may have done in the past - and consider passing copies of it on via either me or the relevant Group Rep. (I must say that I don't expect to be overwhelmed - but I would be delighted to be proved wrong!)

RoW SEMINARS

Tim Stevens, Martin Harding (Bristol Group RoW Officer) and I made the presentations at the first of these at Cardiff on Sunday, 1st April. As I said in last month's Trail, this was a rather low-key affair because of F&M but it was still very well attended considering the circumstances. The consensus was that it was very worthwhile and so I look forward to seeing even more people at the Derby one on the 28th April - circumstances permitting my own attendance - and all the other future events.

CRoW ACT INTERPRETATION

One of the big problems with new legislation is working out what effects it's going to have in the real world before it does. Most times it's really a case of having to wait and see, but some people make a stab at trying to get their heads round the legalise and interpret it for the rest. In our little corner of the RoW world this usually involves several people batting ideas around together and reaching a consensus on what we think it means - and that is what is then passed on to the rest of you. It is not always totally right and so advice that you might be given may possibly change as time goes by. Of course others are attempting to do the same thing at the same time - and their answers often turn out slightly different. Brian Thompson's article in last month's Trail is a case in point. I, and others, believe that Brian's interpretation is rather doom-laden, alarmist and, on some points, incorrect but I certainly wouldn't make any claims of infallibility on the matter. I am, though, always prepared to discuss any points raised, give my reasons for my views and modify them if convinced that they're not correct.

Charlie Morriss, National RoW Officer

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MAFF's emergency powers close footpaths and bridleways

The Ministry of Agriculture has activated emergency powers allowing highway authorities to make orders closing all or some footpaths and bridleways in restricted, or at risk, areas. These restrictions do not apply to BOATs and unclassified roads, but LARA's member organisations are asking everyone to stay off vehicular rights of way as well.

Many people are asking “how long will this last?”

The answer is that nobody knows. The access restrictions will probably remain in force for six weeks after the last confirmed case. In the last major outbreak in 1967 the disease seemed to have died down for about a month, then another case happened. It is important that nobody gets complacent after a couple of weeks with no new cases confirmed.

Richard Fordham, LARA Rep, Tel: 0191 272 3792

NIGEL LANE

Cornwall TRF Group member Nigel Lane was regrettably killed in a road accident on Sunday the 25th of March.

In the two years that we had known Nigel, he had endeared himself to us all with his infectious good nature and team spirit. He always seemed to be smiling and created a feel-good factor in those around him.

We will all miss you Nigel.

Autumn Banquet

*Some three or four times in my life, Lord,
- you have a minute? - it has been my good fortune
To drive all day, across or up or down a well-wooded
small country, on that one day of the year in autumn,
With the leaves still on, when the colours take
away the breath and make the heart sing its
thanks to you, beloved Creator.
The world glows and burns - and round every
corner you show yet a new colour-miracle*

*I drive slowly, for to rush such a meal is
a swine-like sacrilege. And many-coursed
is the banquet offered.*

*The delicate ferns and gorses for starters; the late flowers.
Then, for soup, or fish, the smaller trees
by streams, or away on hills, fringing fields.
Yellows and golds and fawns and pale brown.
I drive on, waiting for the main course,
taking my time, trusting my Chef.*

*Now it comes. And, most generous of
hosts, you offer remarkable, Heavenly choice.
A green plain and a mighty rise of timbered
mountain, to the sky, of a million trees,
Of many kinds, to offer the full spectrum,
the whole colour-card - the works!
Then, for change, a long tunnel to float
through, sun-dappled, faery-gladed.
The leaves, full-grown, of marvellous ambers
and jades and emeralds. Tunnel of jewels.*

*I went to a trade school, Lord, where poetry
was not offered (plumbing was) and 'Scripture'
was unknown (joinery prepared one better
for 'the world outside').*

*Good science and biology department; sound
Darwinian fellers. Had all the answers.
The earth had no mysteries for them.
Who gave us the earth was never mentioned.*

*Want to hear a little joke, Lord? Just
remembered, just come to mind?
It goes thus. The Instructor in Stress-strain
Mechanics of Timber used to do marvellous
blackboard drawings, in many colours.*

*As, absorbed, he did them, he used to
whistle softly, through his teeth.
Always the same old song, beloved of end-of-pier
tenors, from which comes the line:
'But only God can make a tree'.*

Permission to reproduce obtained by
Derrick Collins.

Taken from 'You have a Minute, Lord?'
Author: David Kossoff.

Publishers: Robson Books Ltd.
ISBN 0 86051 009 3 £6.50 net

TRF Executive Meeting Gloucester March 10th 2001 Report

Full minutes will be sent to all Elected and Co-Opted Officers and Group Reps. Any individuals wishing to receive a copy of the full minutes may do so by registering with the Secretary.

The TRF had supported a legal opinion sought by the National Federation of Bridleways regarding the Human Rights Act (and possible infringement by the CroW Act). We do not yet know the outcome.

Group Returns Wayne Little had circulated Group Return forms but not all had been returned. It was therefore not possible at this time to produce any up to date lists. Charlie Morriss, as new ROW Co-ordinator had felt that a list of Group ROW Officers would be useful.

Groups reminded to send in returns.

Training The chairman updated the meeting on what is happening in RoW due to the new Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW Act). Since we recognise that there is going to have to be a countrywide effort to make Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs) and consequently a greater need for research into ancient routes, we also acknowledge that members will need to be trained in the different aspects of research eg what to look for on maps and old documents like Enclosure Awards, Finance Act information and so on. The TRF must also archive information gleaned, with Groups working together so as not to duplicate their efforts.

Much of this work will be done by volunteers, but as much of it will have to take place during working hours it may be necessary to fund it. **John Gardner, Tim Stevens and Dave Tilbury agreed to pursue Co-Ag funding for research.**

Tim Stevens discussed the LARA workshops, which were to be held in Cardiff and Derby, though may be affected by the Foot and Mouth outbreak. He reported that several Counties and Groups had expressed interest in holding training days.

Researched Information The meeting recognised the vast amount of research held by individuals in the TRF which may become unavailable after their death. Bevis Billingham suggested that members make provision for this in their wills. It was thought that Groups could be more forthcoming with their information and that we may start the collection of information process by members telling the secretary if they hold historical information. This way a list of names may be compiled for future use. Groups asked to register the name and approx nature of research held with the secretary.

Archive The TRF does hold some material in a commercial archive. The secretary will try and find out exactly what is in this store.

Membership Report John Pritchard presented the membership figures to date.

Bearing in mind the late start to this year the figures did not seem to be affected by the CRoW Act, uncertainty in the future of the TRF between AGM Parts 1 and 2 or the increase in subscriptions. Donations from members were very significantly up reflecting confidence in the TRF.

John went on to describe the amount of work – in particular the number of processes and actions and the time taken to do them – needed to cope with over 3000 members. A new printer had been purchased which saved over 60% of printing time and he proposed to purchase a note pad computer, software and card printer. This would not only speed up the process but make the job of membership secretary easy to hand over to his successor, as it would be a self sustaining package owned by the TRF. The meeting unanimously supported the purchases, but charged John with the tasks of researching and trying out the equipment.

Financial Report John Gardner reported on the finances to date and gave a forecast of the year to come. There would be a reasonable working surplus and the appeal launched in July 2000 had brought in significant donations. The Fighting Fund would be able to contribute significantly to the £250,000 needed for emergencies and for fighting the CRoW Act.

Rod Butterworth presented an interim cheque for £1000 raised from the sale of The Cary Maps CD.

This is available price £12.50, surplus to the Fighting Fund.

TRF Code of Conduct Tim Stevens gave a brief presentation highlighting the need to enforce our Code of Conduct. We will simply not tolerate bad riding behaviour on runs. **Groups to make sure that their rides are organised according to the TRF Code. Members encouraged to report illegal riding.**

CRoW Act Update The Chairman highlighted that whilst we can ride RUPPs at present, in future it will be illegal to ride them. We need clarification on how we are affected once a claim is filed and also how we are affected by Restricted Byways. Charlie Morriss explained that one part of the Act that is not yet formalised is Restricted Byways and won't be until a Statutory Instrument has been written and passed through Parliament. This may take 1 to 2 years. In the meantime we must be doing our research and be getting ready to claim – we will have to prove vehicular rights exist.

The meeting was reminded that under the new Act Local Access Forums have to be set up and we need to be on them – or our interests will not be served.

LARA Report Tim Stevens pointed out that their training workshops would be useful to the TRF. LARA Officer time has been taken up with the CRoW Act and LARA publications will be brought up to date with a new Access Guide, leaflets and even a website!

TRF Web Site The chairman noted the PR value of the website and Dave Tilbury offered his e.mail address as a point of contact for TRF messages: dave.Tilbury@lineone.net. Charlie Morriss felt that there was a need for good active

PR to counter the anti laning publicity and wanted funding for this function.
Agenda item for next Exec

Merchandising If this is to continue as a service to members we need a manager to come forward.
Any volunteers out there?

RoW Report Charlie Morriss will be writing a column in Trail. The TRF had supported a request for Counsel's Opinion on the Arncliffe Cote Inquiry as there were inconsistencies in the Inspector's Report. The Second Inquiry having come to a different conclusion to the first. The Chairman asked for a full report and confirmed that the TRF would help its members wherever possible but had to consider its priorities.

Charlie reported that he was going to the Ramblers AGM and would let us know what happened. He also requested funding for secretarial help in typing up his notes and getting a training protocol drawn up. The meeting agreed.

Liaison with other bodies on RoW Initiative The Chairman explained that the TRF will need to cooperate and liaise with as many organisations as it can, eg the BHS, NFBA, 4WD organisations etc. Mark Holland reminded the meeting that Dave Giles had requested our input into the Statutory Instruments needed for the CRoW Act and felt we should buy expert help in this.

Production of the TRF Handbook This needs updating and Tim Stevens and Fred Ellison will work together on producing it. **Input and photos from members requested.**

Foot and Mouth The TRF had sent notice to all Groups by e contact on Friday 23rd February to stop Trail riding immediately. This had been a very rapid response. **The TRF will notify its members when it is safe to start again.**

Vice Chairmen Ted Scott noted that the AGM had approved the co-option of another Vice Chairman and Tim Stevens was proposed, seconded by Keith Westley. The Chairman explained that he had asked Tim to take on the training aspects for the TRF and this would be his first task as VC. Tim assured the meeting this would not conflict with his work for LARA and the meeting agreed to his co-option. **Tim Stevens is a Vice Chairman.**

Horse Events Colin Patient reported that these events net on average £40 per man per day and that this was an excellent way of donating to the Fighting Fund. **He would like more information from groups about events covered.**

Limited Company Status Colin Patient presented a document drawn up in 1980 proposing the TRF became a Ltd Company. The Secretary agreed to copy this and circulate to the Exec. **Agenda item next meeting.**

Next Meeting: Saturday 23 June National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham.

PICOS DE EUROPA - FINAL PART

THURSDAY 5th October

We awake quite late after sleeping like the dead. First time this week for me. For some reason I have been sleeping really badly, even though the bed has been very comfortable. Low clouds over the mountains greet us as we open the door and wait for Peter Jay to put in his customary appearance. The forecast seems to indicate that the weather may perk up later, but the reality doesn't look so good. After I have knocked up a breakfast of toast, marmite and cheese and had a couple of cups of tea, I go off to lube the chains and tighten up a few wayward spokes. By this time it is raining lightly, and as we are all feeling lethargic, we decide to make this the shopping and chill-out day.

Mike, Les and Fledgling depart from the Potes car park to hunt down some articulos, typicos, artesanias, regionales, while Dave and myself go off up through the town. Dave to the fag shop for another raid on the poor geezers stock of Bensons and Golden Virginia, and me to my usual haunt of the T-shirt / Sweatshirt shop. The two old bats are still working there and have got used to seeing me every October! Once the shopping is completed, we all meet up in the Plaza bar for a couple of cups of coffee before deciding to pay Fuente De a visit. Very misty at the cable car, and eerily quiet and devoid of touristicos! After watching a couple of trips of the cable cars disappearing into the mist at about 1,000 feet, we head back to El Caballo for a wash and brush up before going back into town.

Mike has heard of a small bar behind the market square that sells draught Guinness. We hunt it out - talk about medieval! The tiny bar has an old ham on the back shelf in amongst the CD's and tapes, and some rather unappetising tapas bits and pieces gazing forlornly from the front counter. Still, the genuine pints of cold Guinness are as good as you will find anywhere! Nobody fancies another surprisingly, and Les is hurting from an injury that he picked up just before the holiday. Some idiot had driven a cart with angle iron on it into his leg and it is starting to give him Gip. We head off to the El Bodegon again for dinner, once again it's quite acceptable. Everyone is a bit low key, so we beetle off home and get off to bed early.

FRIDAY 6th October

Friday dawns a bit brighter. Les appears and is hobbling quite badly. We speak to Francois as he trots past and he says that the weather is likely to be bad up high, but not too bad lower down, and the forecast is better for Saturday and Sunday.

We decide to go anyway and we hit the tracks at 10:30, minus Les who has wisely decided to give his leg a bit of a rest. As we ride into Potes for fuel, a couple

of Brit bikes appear at our shoulders and wave us down. Turns out to be a bunch of guys from Shropshire who have come across on the Brittany Ferries boat from Plymouth for a short 4 day break. They are riding mainly old XT Yams, and one of the guys has ridden all the way from Santander on an ancient DT175 that he has just bought for 50 quid!! We fill them in on a couple of the routes and advise them on which maps to buy from the map shop. They seem like a good bunch, so we agree to meet them in the Hotel del Oso in Cosgaya, where they are staying, for a beer or two in the evening.

After saying our temporary goodbyes to the lads, we fill up at the little petrol pump in town and set sail for Tudes and 'Mikes Hill'. Mike is the only one with the guts to have a go this year. Dave and myself have concocted a wonderful excuse about being worried about crashing on the way down and doing some terminal damage to our mucho expensive radiators. To try and get a better impression of the gradient of the hill on the video, I decide to walk halfway up it. Before I have composed myself and get the vid sorted out, Woody is starting his first assault! By the time I have the camera focused on him, he is roaring past me as I pant like an old goat and try unsuccessfully to stop the camera waving about as I try and catch my breath. He makes the descent look easy and promptly turns round and has another go. This time, he has started a gear too high and as he flies past me I can hear him stamping the DR down a cog to get a bit more drive. After

having to foot a bit, he disappears over the skyline again and I prepare myself for the climb down. Not easy in smooth-soled motocross boots on a 40 degree incline.

Woody still isn't finished and after coming back down for a second time, he carries on over the hill on the opposite side. This is more of a problem, cos a dozer has recently graded it and the surface is very steep and loose. It looks like the village are trying to extend the firebreak down towards the valley floor. Anyhow, Mike gets stuck as he is turning round and much to our amusement, after squawking about our lack of a tow rope, has to call upon the services of the Fledgling to get him restarted. We think he is going to use him for traction!

After Mike has yet another go at the big hill and makes it all the way to the very top of the firebreak, I hand the camera to Dave so he can get a few minutes of taking the mickey out of me making a prat of myself. That's the problem when you are usually behind the lens, nobody knows what an awkward fat git you look like on a bike! Suffice to say that the results are less than aesthetically pleasing to anyone but me!

Having exhausted our fun time on the hill, we head off through the woods to look for the link up track to Caloca. We don't find it, but we go up to one of the radio masts and are surprised to find an air con unit bolted to the outside of the little hut. Coming back down, we find a new track that takes us out into the village of Piasca where we find a nice little cafe. The bird behind the bar has the most wonderful rear end! The Mother doesn't look too clever though. Face like a beaver that has been hit by a baseball bat!

Suitably refreshed after a couple of rounds of cafe con leche, we head off for Pena Sagra. This track is a blinder. I have forgotten the bit of downhill on the tarmac before heading uphill once again to Somanieza, after which it gets very steep and harshly rocky with tight hairpin bends. After swanning around by the church for a few minutes, taking in the view, we head down the equally lovely alternate descent through the birch woods back to the road in Ojedo and an early-ish finish.

After checking that the old geezer (Lezzo) is OK, we head into town for a bit more shopping i.e. another raid on the fag shop in Dave's case, buy some local honey (very nice) and an incredibly smelly and overpriced Cabrales cheese (thankfully vacuum packed).

We head out to Cosgaya to meet up with the Shropshire lads and eat in the Hotel del Oso. When we arrive, Bill the South African guy is already sinking pints and is later joined by the rest of his troupe. A few beers go down really well and we find we get on with the guys just fine. Can't remember all their names, but John Loader and Brian Turner are two of them. (Must get in touch and find out how they got on going home). We find that they are stuck out of the way in the restaurant, so we never get to share banter or annoy the other guests during the meal. Food is damn good, but a bit on the pricey side. With a bottle of wine it makes a bigger than average sized hole in the kitty!

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SATURDAY 7th October

Les, though still in a bit of pain from his gammy leg, decides to ride today. We head off over the top of the mountains to Cain (the start of the Cares gorge) via the Cosgaya valley track to Fuente De. There are a few more walkers/hunters about due to the weekend. Also, there is fresh horse manure on the track which hints that there might be some of the beasties about. The thought of running into them limits the use of the right hand somewhat. Luckily we don't see any. After going over the mountain, we drop down the road towards Cain. We stop at the Mirador del Tomba and take in the breathtaking views of the mountains towering above us at about 8,500ft. A gang of obviously Spanish tourists jump out of a car and one of them, a rather attractive chica, asks Dave to take a group photo of them at the monument - in a lovely broad Scottish accent! Turns out she has just returned to Galicia after 3 years working in Glasgow.

We carry on down the narrow road to Cain until we get to the old wolf trap - a strange device that the locals used years ago. It is made using a funnel of vertical timbers to herd wolves into a sunken stone turret from which there is no escape. The hunters used spears to kill the poor unfortunate trapped beasts. After having a good snout around the trap we head on down to Cain. This place has grown a bit during the last 2 years. There are now 3 cafe/bars there when there only used to be one. Several other new buildings have sprung up as well. The tourist route is obviously paying dividends for the locals. We have a round of coffees and after relaxing for half an hour, we head back the way we came.

As we come out at Fuente De, Dave and myself realise we are a bit low on juice, so at Pido we decide to call it a day and head back to El Caballo with Woody. Leigh and Les are still raring to go so they set off to have an explore round the back of Potes, around the Lon and Brez area. They add a further 30kms to the days tally, and come back quite chuffed that they have found a couple of new tracks. One of them is really narrow and only just passable. Seems like they have had a good final fling on the bikes. Good job really, cos Les missed all the fun yesterday.

We meet up with the Shropshire nutters in the evening in El Bodegon and have a laugh telling tall tales and getting slightly blotto. Bill is their worst offender. Some of the stuff he is coming out with is amazing. Typical Springbok I guess. We have a good meal and as we stumble out onto the street, they climb on their bikes and disappear through Potes in high spirits and at high speed! Totally mad, the lot of 'em.

As we drive back to base, we spot the car of Les Lodge parked outside a bar in Camaleno, so Mike and I trot back on foot after we have parked the car. The rest of the tribe decide to turn in. When Woody and I get to the bar it's locked up, but we bang on the door and are let in. Les and his 2 mates have driven all the way down through France cos one of them is a very poor sailor. They made it in 15 hours. Beggar that for a laugh. We chat with them for about 15 minutes during

which time they pick our brains but don't offer us a beer. Thanks lads! They don't even offer us a lift back either!! The walk back has me puffing cos it's uphill and Mike has a longer stride than me. Little do I know how hard I will be puffing tomorrow on the Tresviso track!!

SUNDAY 8th October

Early start today - we are at Urdon ready to begin our hiking assault on the summit of Tresviso. (Sounds grand doesn't it!). The early part of the track is picturesque and relatively easy. However, as we climb higher, things take on a very different slant. The track gets steeper, looser, more serpentine and has some amazing drop-offs. By the time we are half way up, I feel as if I am melting, and at any moment I am expecting my hip joints to seize up completely. The pain in my hips means that I am stopping every 25 yards or so till the pain subsides. Les is far in front of the rest of us. He knows that if he stops, his leg will not let him get going again, so he presses on until very near the village.

The rest of us struggle on up and eventually find Les sitting on a tussock of grass by the side of the track. He has been watching one of the Griffons cruising the ridge only some 20 feet below him. We all continue and eventually arrive at the bar at the top of the track in Treviso village. Beer has never tasted so good! It has taken us 3 hrs to walk up the bloody track and I am sweating like a pig and wishing I had worn shorts. We mingle with other, mainly Spanish, tourists in the bar, and after watching them pouring cider from the weird contraption on the bar wall, we scoff 5 Cornetto ice creams, before we head off back down the track.

A few hundred yards into the descent and we are 'buzzed' by a massive Griffon vulture. He circles overhead as I get a few minutes of film of him riding the thermals. As we are watching him, one of his buddies pulls out of a dive over our heads and rises to perch on a rock ledge perhaps a 100 feet above us. The noise as it comes past us reminds me of Jerry the glider pilot doing a low level pass at Upavon gliding club! We continue on down, passing the skeleton of a Griffon trapped under a rock by the side of the path. Don't know if the rock had been put there after the bird had died, or if the rock had killed it! We make it back down in an hour and a quarter. Much quicker going down than going up! We are all absolutely shattered.

Arriving back at El Caballo, we chat with Les Lodge and his party, who say that they have been out on some trails that were steep and ended up in a meadow with no way out. Probably Caloca then! On the way down the 2 strokes have boiled their brake fluid, and Les blags some from our Les. Even though we tell them that Tresviso is dangerous, they say they are determined to ride it. We expect to see reports of dead English bikers in the newspapers!!

We have our last evening meal in Casa Cayo where once again we meet up with Tilly Muller and have a good laugh (mainly at Leigh's expense) with the waitresses. The little dark haired one hams it up and draws a ring on her finger

and points to Leigh, saying that if we come back next year she will be his girlfriend. Poor bloke doesn't know where to put himself and threatens me with murder if I write anything incriminating about the escapades. He needn't worry, he is completely innocent of any wrong doing. The girls and us just managed to wind up the mischief. Eventually we all say our goodbyes, get back to El Caballo and set the alarms for 6:30am. Oh God!

MONDAY 9th October

We awake on cue. Hitch up the bikes and are on our way on time. Dark drive through the Hermida. Les, Leigh and Mike stop at Urdon and pick up some of the rocks as memento's. We have a reasonable trip back to the ferry, apart from an unplanned tour of Torrelavega because they have changed the roads. Lost? Us? Yes!

Les, Leigh and Mike board fairly quickly, while Dave and yours truly are some of the last to get on the ship. We spot the others on the back deck of the ship, drinking beer and taking the mickey while we are still in the queue. At least we get to meet George Cherry who runs tours of the Picos and Morrocco. He wanders over after seeing a load of his charges off on the ship, to ask what we think of the XR650's. Seems like a good bloke.

We leave port 15 minutes late and about 4 hours out the captain comes on the tannoy to tell us we are in for a bumpy ride home. Storm force 10 to be precise and the ship is predicted to arrive 7 hours late at Portsmouth. Leigh gets ejected from the bridge by the second officer as he is threatening to puke on the floor during our bridge 'tour'. Luckily, most of the bad weather occurs while we are sleeping like babies, even though the rough weather has the car alarms screeching all night. We do, as expected, arrive 7 hours late.

We leave Portsmouth at about 11:45 pm and immediately go our separate ways. Les has to drop Mike and his kit off at Horton before heading for Shaftesbury and then Bath to do the same for Leigh. He eventually gets home sometime after 3 in the morning and the poor old bloke has to be at work at 7am. Dave and myself just point the Audi along the M27 and take the Salisbury turn-off. We get home at 1:15am. I drop Dave off at his house and take the bikes to my house for collection later. Another Picos trip, possibly the last one, is at an end.

Hope you enjoyed the read.

Best wishes on and off the trail.

Vic Price.

P.S. Anyone fancy Andorra? Les is up for it. (Not sure if I can afford to go next year. The family is off to the West Coast of America and it promises to be expensive! At least it will give someone else the chance to practice their Spanish).

WE SAID THE HORSERIDERS WOULD BE NEXT

Tow path ruined by fox hunters - claim

From Market Drayton Advertiser 23/2/01

Huntsmen are ruining areas of natural importance in Market Drayton, residents have claimed.

Cheswardine residents have claimed that fox hunters have badly damaged part of the Shropshire Union Canal tow path between Wharf Tavern and the bridge on Cheswardine Road.

Nearly 30 horses galloped along the path having hoof marks nine inches deep. The path has been left in a poor condition and has since been difficult to walk along.

A Cheswardine resident said: "They have really made a mess. That was when we had a cold patch when the ground was hard - so if the ground had been wet it would have been even worse."

Frightened

One lady who was moored in a boat was livid because she pays £1,000 a

year in mooring fees.

She said: "I was frightened. The last five horses galloped and I was worried that they would trip on the mooring line and fall onto my boat. Their arrogance is beyond belief."

The huntsman also rode through Deep Cutting, a wood which is a Site of Scientific Interest (SSI).

The Cheswardine resident added: "It is a unique habitat and there is a lot of unique plant life in the wood. They go through each year as if they own it. There is a waterways by-law that says no hunting in this wood. I am sure they are aware of this."

A spokesman for British Waterways said: "If any damage has been done by the hunt we will take action - if it has been caused by a party we can identify."



NO INTERNAL DIVISIONS PLEASE

I see from March Trail that Brian Thompson is urging members to go against the rules they have all signed up to. In my view, he has a simple choice, and so has anyone who agrees with his go-it-alone policy. They can get the rules changed to remove any suggestion of co-operation with others, or they leave the TRF. Should they do neither, they should shut up. There are enough problems from outside the TRF, surely, without internal divisions?

Tim Stevens, TRF member

- and the bloke at LARA who tries to convince the opposition that we agree.

GOOD DEAL ALL ROUND

Having purchased a number of new bikes over the years I've had good, bad and indifferent service.

January and February saw the start of the next search for a new DRZ. The dealer, Leisure Trail UK (Long Eaton 0115 973 2466). The process was painless from test ride (how often can you get an off tarmac test ride) through to collection. I negotiated an excellent on the road price including decent tyres, handguards and bash plate, etc.

Am I on commission I hear you ask! No, but there is always a free coffee and sweets on the counter. If you want excellent friendly service from TRF members try Leisure Trail.

Mark Phillips, East Midlands

Ed It's good to hear that TRF members are supporting their TRAIL advertisers and getting a good deal at the same time.

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YAMAHA 225XT SEROW 1992, 12 months T&T. Mature owner. 12,000kms + 5,000 miles. £1250. Tel: 01283 814734.

FOR SALE Yamaha XT600 Tenere, 1986 "C". V.G.C. Extras. Red & white. £1500 ono. Tel: 01386 443493 or 07890 707411.

WANTED DR350 sprocket carrier and cush drive rubbers. Tel: 01274 833510.

XR400 January '99. White. Jetted-full power, exhaust tip, taxed, frame-hand and sump guards, Acerbis h/light, well shod, trail use only. £2750 ovno. Tel: 01446 408467 (after 6pm) mobile 07929 000221.

DR350 1994. 10,000 miles. Tax and long MOT. Brand new back tyre, C&S, sealed battery, wheel bearings. Reluctant sale due to baby arrival. Good condition. £1450. Tel: 01428 609021 (Surrey).

YAMAHA DT175MX Lots of spares for air

cooled DTs. Please ring for details. I would like to shift the lot if possible but will split. Tel: Geoff 0161 427 6296.

SUZUKI DR250S August 1998, 6800 miles. 1 owner, masses of extras, excellent condition. £2295 ono. Tel: 01749 679013.

LEATHER TROUSERS for sale. Frank Thomas. Black. 32 inch waist. Cost £150 new. Hardly used. Bargain £65. Tel: 0208 789 6623 (Southfields, London).

FOR SALE Bike jacket. Large, black, Belstaff, lined. Brand new, still labelled. £40 inc. p&p. Tel: 01332 874947.

3 BIKE TRAILER Very good condition. £120. Tel: 01732 883918 (Kent).

HONDA SLR650 1996, new chain & sprockets, tyres, rear shock, Renthals. Too much to list. Ex. condition, T&T. £1500.

MZ301 tour 1972. Cheap to run. T&T. Good condition. Quick sale reqd. £350 ono.

Wanted DT175 spares. Petrol tank, gear lever, rear mudguard or anything interesting. Also wanted DT250 seat. Tel: Mick 0208 206 0480.

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