

## 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. Snaith*

**ESSEX**  
Dave Anderson, Tel: 01277 657783  
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** 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 823865  
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, *Penle 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 McDermaid, Tel: 02380 812371  
3rd Tues, *The Phoenix, Twyford, Nr. Winchester*

**SOUTH LONDON & SURREY**  
Steve Sharp, 0181 773 4204  
9pm 1st 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, Woolston, 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.*



# TRAIL

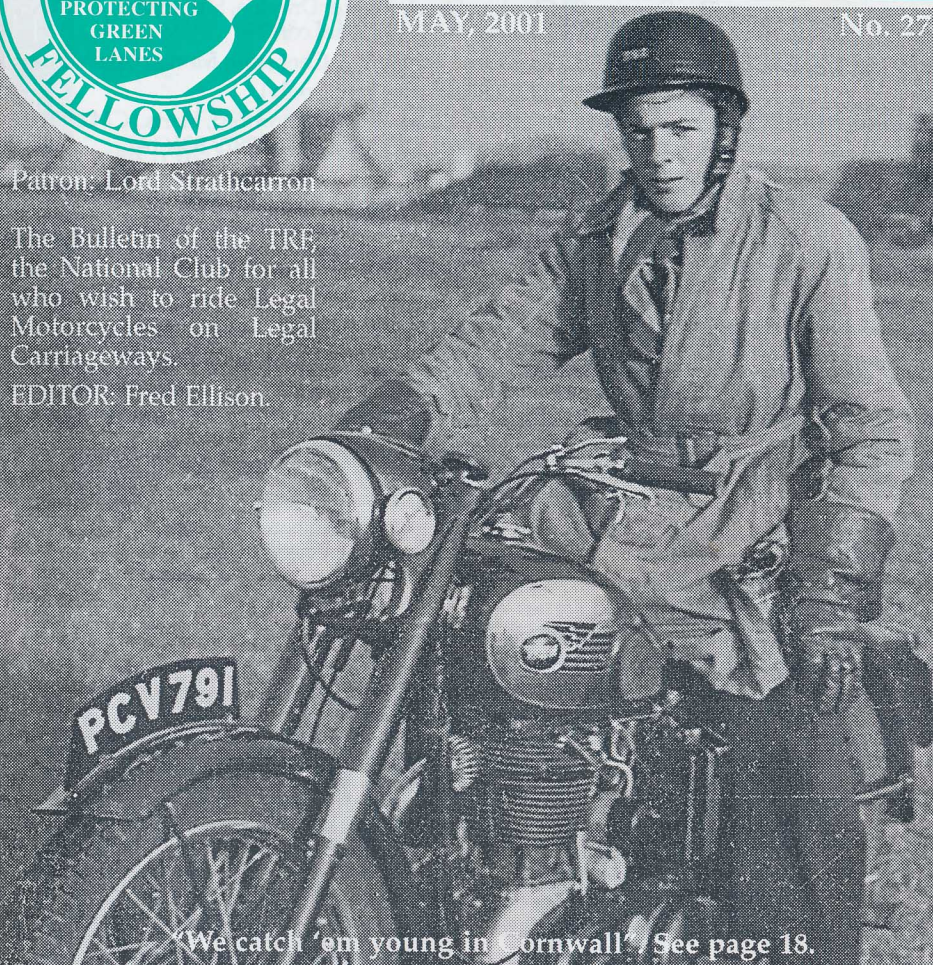
MAY, 2001

No. 273

Patron: Lord Strathcarron

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

EDITOR: Fred Ellison.



'We catch 'em young in Cornwall' See page 18.

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

# TRF OFFICERS

- CHAIRMAN** ..... André G. Confavreux, 18 Water Tower Close, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1XS. Tel: 01895 237453, E-mail: andre.confavreux@swanhill.co.uk
- VICE CHAIRMEN** ..... Dave Tilbury, Oakbank Cottage, Oakbank Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 6PA. Tel: 023 8061 8937, E-Mail: dave@hants-lanes.fsnet.co.uk  
Tim Stevens, 99 Cheshire Street, Market Drayton, Shropshire, TF9 1AE. Tel: 01630 657627, E-mail: timLARA@aol.com
- 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: 07879 804614, E-mail: trfmemsec@aol.com
- SECRETARY** ..... Sally A. Madgwick, 1 Halgavor Road, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL31 1BW. Tel: 01208 74411, E-Mail: sally@samadgwick.freeserve.co.uk
- TREASURER** ..... John Gardner, 119 Hallbridge Gardens, Up Holland, Lancs., WN8 0EP. Tel: 01695 622792.
- EDITOR** ..... Fred Ellison, Sheepcote Farm, Moor Lane, Wiswell, Clitheroe, Lancs., BB7 9DG. Tel: 01254 823893, Fax: 01254 887999, E-Mail: print@ellison.sagehost.co.uk
- RoW OFFICER** ..... Charlie Morriss, The Bell, Brimscombe Hill, Burleigh, Stroud, Glos. GL5 2PU. Tel: 01453 885323, Mob: 0410 336528, E-mail: charlietrf@aol.com
- BMF LIAISON OFFICER** ..... Steve Sharp, 4 Nelson Court, 17 Denmark Road, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 2JH. Tel: 0208 773 4204.
- LARA REP.** ..... Richard Fordham, 23 Benwell Grove, North Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 8AN. Tel: 0191 272 3792, E-mail: Richard.Fordham@NCL.AC.UK
- KEEPERS OF STATIONERY** ..... Leaflets & Membership Forms, John Pritchard. *Membership Secretary.* Letterheads & Compliments Slips, Fred Ellison. *Editor.*
- DISPLAY EQUIPMENT CO-ORDINATOR** Leo Crone, Tel: 01325 463815 (7a.m. - 5p.m.). Display boards held at Unit 10, Red Barnes Way, McMullen Rd., Darlington.
- EQUESTRIAN EVENTS LIAISON OFFICER** Colin Patient, 14 Ryecroft Close, Woodley, Berks., RG5 3BP. Tel: 0118 969 6783.

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

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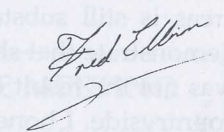
# EDITORS

It's almost June and still no trail riding. We can only hope that the foot and mouth problem, which thankfully seems to be abating, doesn't rear its ugly head again once the election is over. I do hope not for the sake of the farmers, the tourist industry and all the RoW users who are showing a lot of restraint by staying at home.

However some groups are using this period of inactivity to catch up on their research and if you aren't one of these groups just think about the statutory instruments which are being drawn up which will eliminate so many lanes if you do not have the necessary evidence for them.

I have just been speaking with Dave Giles on the telephone and he tells me that The Trail Riders Alliance which he is working on has been warmly received by other higher rights user groups, i.e. 4x4, Horse and Horse and carriage and is making good progress, which might lighten the load on the T.R.F.

My next trail riding experience will interestingly be exercising a KLX on an enduro training/circuit course. This is being organised by the Lancashire Group of the TRF and it is on private land and not subject to any restrictions. I can't wait to see how we get on and broken bones allowing will let you know how we fare.



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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN .....

Since my last contribution to "Trail" I have been away in Australia. I don't know how many of you have had the opportunity to visit this continent, but my first impressions have been most favourable and therefore I am finding it very difficult to turn my mind back to the more serious issues confronting me on my return.

Of particular note however is the possibility that the recent foot and mouth outbreak has peaked and is now abating. This must be good news for everyone, but particularly those directly affected, not least the proprietors of the B&B accommodation which we all enjoy when we go away for a weekend trail riding.

I have been asked on a number of occasions whether it is now timely to reconsider the voluntary moratorium which the TRF has imposed on trail riding. Given that some local authorities are opening up lanes which were previously restricted, this would encourage us to believe that perhaps a blanket ban is now less appropriate. However, the situation has not changed sufficiently for the TRF to withdraw its restriction on trail riding. I think it is only fair that I should elaborate further on the arguments for maintaining the current status.

The primary one is that the instances of the disease are reducing, but it has not yet been eradicated. Therefore, any venturing into the countryside - notwithstanding what councils say - still poses the threat of transmitting the disease. You will appreciate that motor cyclists can cover considerably more distance than a walker or a horse rider. Secondly, given the opening up of a limited number of routes and locations, it is quite possible that these will attract a larger than normal number of people who would otherwise have available to them a wider range of routes and destinations, thus it is likely that such lanes will become "crowded"

Frustrating though it is, I believe we cannot enjoy our pastime without attracting criticism by being premature in using even selected lanes which have been opened up by local authorities. The danger of venturing into prohibited areas is still substantial and therefore we must be patient so that we can demonstrate that should any new outbreak of foot and mouth be discovered it was not the result of our having a cavalier approach to the opening up of the countryside. I honestly believe that we can attract more credit and sympathy for our cause by being patient.

Your self-restraint is appreciated and I can assure you the situation is being monitored.

*Andre Confaoreux - Chairman*

## NOTICE BOARD

### OCTOBER 1995 TRAIL

I would like to beg, or borrow a copy of TRAIL for month of October 1995 please.

Can anyone help me out?

Gordon Carr, Tel: 01729 830569

### LARA WORKSHOP

Saturday 16th June 2001

All are invited to this workshop.  
Ilkeston Co-op Banqueting Suite,  
South Street, Ilkeston,  
Derbyshire.

Map 129, Grid ref. 4640 4150.

Cost £10.00 inc. buffet.

To book  
please contact Ray Clayton,  
Tel: 0115 9161584 (home)  
or 0115 9321884 (work)  
or e-mail:  
ray.clayton@glass-uk.org.

### SOUTH WEST REGION TRAINING DAY

Covering research and procedures for the placing of DMMOs.

Saturday June 2nd 2001  
at Puriton Village Hall.

Ring Martin Harding  
on 0117 9696674 to book  
or see your Group Rep. for details.

### SOUTH LONDON & SURREY GROUP

Due to the Foot & Mouth crisis the South London & Surrey Group are now meeting on the first Wednesday of the month.

We shall return to more regular meetings once we are riding again.

### EXECUTIVE MEETING

Our next Executive Meeting is on Saturday June 23rd 2001.

Please see agenda overleaf.

# NOTICE OF NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

Saturday June 23rd 2001  
10.00 a.m. for 10.30 a.m. start

National Watersports Centre, Holme Pierrepont, Notts  
Tel: 01159 821212

M1 Junction 24, take A453 to Nottingham (S).  
Take A52 Grantham. Follow brown signs to NWSC

Welcome

Apologies for Absence

Approval of the Minutes of the Last Meeting

Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

Training Protocol

Co-Ag Funding

Archive

PR Funding

Merchandising

Production of TRF Handbook

Reports from Officers:

Treasurer

Membership

RoW

LARA

Liaison with other bodies: Possibility of Users Alliance

Limited Company Status

Any Other Business

## RoW NEWS

### FROM THE RoW OFFICER

#### RoW Seminars

I managed to attend the Derby seminar on the 28th of last month along with 38 others, including some from the horse-riding fraternity. We all enjoyed an entertaining set of presentations from Alan Kind and Tim Stevens, with contributions from Richard Marshall, John Hall of the BHS, and Tim from Notts. CC (sorry Tim, I've forgotten your Surname). The consensus was that it was interesting and very well worth attending. There are a number of others in the pipeline - please contact Tim Stevens, Alan Kind or myself for details.

#### Lake District HOTR

I have just received a copy of the latest draft report on the progress of the Hierarchy of Trail Routes Initiative in the Lake District. A quick scan through highlighted that the main problems in most cases were due to lack of maintenance and the very wet weather over the past year, and use by heavy agricultural and forestry vehicles. It was disappointing though to find out that a few individuals (mostly Trail Riders) are apparently ignoring and even interfering with some of the HOTR signs and also the TRO signs on the Parkmoor and Old Coach Road routes. This sort of behaviour could well put this and similar initiatives in peril, and result in wider restrictions and even total bans on vehicular use of green lanes in this and other areas. I very much hope that no TRF members have done so - and if you know of anyone who has make sure they understand the risks they are selfishly exposing our pastime to.

#### P.I. Inspectors Advice Notes

I have also recently received copies of the latest Rights of Way Advice Notes issued to P.I. Inspectors by the DETR. After I have read them properly I will let you all know if there is anything in them that I think is of general interest. But if any of you would like to see copies please let me know and I will endeavour to send you some.

## New National Park

The 2 new National Parks for the South Downs and New Forest areas are now well into the planning stage. If you live in or near them, or go Trail-riding in them, please do your best to help make sure that we can continue to enjoy all the green lanes in them that we do at present. I'm sure our Vice-Chairman, Dave Tilbury, would be delighted to have some help in doing just so.

### Were you Trail Riding in the Wye Valley on the 18th of February?

I have had reports from the local Ramblers Association of 5 Trail-riders on the Wye Valley Walk just north of Wynd Cliff (a mile south of Tintern) on the 18th of February. As far as I can tell this was on a section that is a Permitted Path ONLY. Were you one of those Trail-riders? If so, I would like to know why you were there. Have you researched the route, or were you lost? If I hear nothing I will certainly be taking the matter further.

*Charlie Morriss*

## DOWNGRADING OF RuPP J15A IN LEICESTERSHIRE

Following a Public Inquiry in January, RuPP J15a near Beeby and South Croxton, known locally as Beebys Wood, on Landranger sheet 141 at grid references 665098 to 681093 has been reclassified as a Bridleway. I'm surprisingly in agreement with this decision as all my research into the route indicated it had always been a Bridleway. Unfortunately this puts me in the strange position of actually agreeing with Andrew Dunlop of GLEAM who represented the land-owner at the Inquiry.

Never mind, I'm amassing evidence to give Mr. Dunlop a much more local RoW matter to enjoy in the future (outside his front door in fact)!

Incidentally, with the latest Countryside Act, Leicestershire currently has a grand total of around 20 miles of Byways left to enjoy. I'm onto this as well. Reckon we'll extend that a bit in the coming months.

*Joe Greaves, Leicestershire & Rutland  
RoW Officer*

This article is as relevant today as the day it was written  
for the Exmoor Society in 1968

## Problems of Conservation

What is the use of prosperity and affluence if our environment itself is ruined and degraded and life becomes not worth living?

Prince Philip once put it, 'If we abandon the countryside... we might as well abandon all the plans and expenses for a better standard of living. Without some remnants of the countryside which has inspired and warmed the hearts of generations of British people, life in these islands is going to be reduced to the level of animals on a factory farm.'

What kind of people does an unnatural, exploited environment eventually produce? In our overcrowded, over-permissive money-motivated society, from which the challenge of living is being removed, the young are beginning to sicken and rebel, and older generations to despair. Any animal, human or otherwise, needs space to live in and scope for his energies if he is to develop as a balanced and healthy being. Already, the pressures of present day living are blunting our natural compassion and making less scrupulous and more selfish. If one is driving on a major road in a hoard of fast-moving cars one can no longer stop to help someone in distress, even if they are lying unconscious at the side of the road; any application of the brakes, and a multi-accident would follow - so all one can do is drive on desperately, hoping to find a side road and a telephone. That may be called progress, but it is not civilisation.

We cannot make this small island any larger, but we can fight to save its last precious reserves of wilderness, and try to get the value of our environment understood. It was sadly significant when Professor Tress went touring through the West Country he made many arrangements to meet industrialists, local authorities, planners and farmers, but no arrangements to meet the defenders of the region's beauty, the amenity organisations, although his Strategy for the South-West contained some excellent sentiments about the value of the region's splendid landscape. It is the same story all along the line - the defenders of the countryside are grossly under-represented in all the corridors of power, both national and local. The Water Resources Board, that very powerful Government-sponsored body which is planning the future water resources for the whole country, has every kind of representative on the Board except a representative of amenity. We cannot any longer afford to go on preserving the green lanes in the old time-honoured way. We must alter our methods to suit the times we live in. If you live in a jungle, you have to learn how to practice jungle warfare or go under. We must not and need not go on losing the battle any longer. It is too important.

As President Johnson USA said, 'Once a natural splendour is destroyed it can never be recaptured. Once man can no longer share with beauty or wonder at nature, his spirit will wither, and his sustenance be wasted.'

*Julian Bruford*

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# In The Land of Chinggis Khaan

## - Mongolia 2000

The United Kingdom has a land area of 244,755 sq. km and has a population of approximately 57,000,000. That is an approximate density of 240 people per sq. km. Mongolia is 1,565,000 sq. km and has a population of approximately 2,190,000, and 30% of them live in the capital city. That's an approximate density of 1 person per sq. km. In other words Mongolia is over 5 times the size of the UK but WE have 26 times the population of Mongolia. Which in simple terms must mean that there are a lot of wide-open spaces out there and once outside of the main centres of population, and there aren't many of those, you may not see anyone for days on end.

We had been invited to Mongolia to join a group of motorcyclists for a one-week tour by motorcycle. The trip was organised by Explore Travel who organises what might be coined as trail rides with a difference. We intended to stay in Mongolia for a second week and organise ourselves; hopefully hiring motorcycles and travel on our own or perhaps hire a four-wheel drive vehicle and explore a bit.

As I have said we envisaged that we may not see anyone for days on end and this brings its own little problems. How frequent are petrol stations? How frequent are places to replenish water supplies? As water treatment tends to be related to density of population what is the quality of the water likely to be? If there are not many people, is it likely that there will not be many shops or roads? If the roads are not used much how well maintained would they be, if at all? Road signs again are related to density so would there be many and would they be readable as the Russian Cyrillic alphabet is still in use in Mongolia?

These were all the type of questions which we had started to ask ourselves in our planning of the two weeks we were to spend in Mongolia, or would it be Outer Mongolia. Outer Mongolia conjures up visions of one of the remotest places in the world but I suppose there is no such place today as Inner Mongolia as it is now part of the Republic of China. Hopefully this initial contact would make it easier to organise the second week when we intended to go off on our own on the motorcycles we had used in the first week. This actually didn't happen. We hired 2 off road vehicles complete with drivers due to the difficulty of navigating around the country.

Communicating with Mongolia is not easy but with the advent of E-mail it is considerably better than it was. It is very difficult to telephone the country and rumour has it that letters either never arrive or take forever. It is not easy, as different cultures think very differently and even E-mails can become confusing when they quote place names, which don't appear on the maps in front of you.

Confidence in the communication situation did not improve when we were told that we could not hire any vehicles for the second week unless we had a guide. 'There are few services, and there are NO road signs in Mongolia' were the reasons given. Surely not! Then a few days later another E-mail confirming the hire price without a guide. Had they suddenly put up a stack of road signs or had they heard I had the use of a friend's Global Positioning System for the trip? If so they obviously hadn't heard that I wasn't very well versed in the use of it. (It later transpired that this E-mail had lost something in the translation, they would not allow us out on our own as there were no route direction signs outside of the capital city Ulaanbaatar).

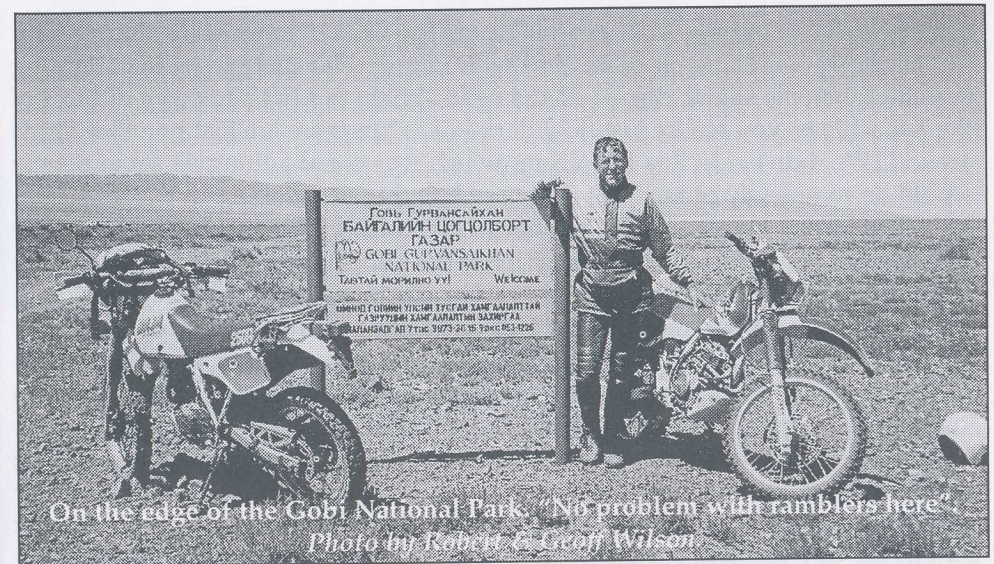
Booking flights to Mongolia is not an easy task. With only four international carriers flying into Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's only international airport, the choice is somewhat restricted. The best bet is probably to fly to Beijing and in from there with Air China. The other options are from Korea with Korean air, Russia with Aeroflot and from Berlin with MIAT, Mongolia's own carrier. As we were on a tight schedule the only sensible way was with MIAT, which some say stands for 'Maybe It'll Arrive Tomorrow and maybe it won't', from Berlin via Moscow. It was impossible to buy tickets from our local travel agent, I think something to do with MIAT not being IARTA approved, but transferring the price of the airline tickets to a bank account in the USA solved this problem. The tickets were then issued in Ulaanbaatar and found their way to us via the Mongolian Embassy in London.

First impressions are sometimes misleading but often are a true representation of what is to come. The International Airport at Ulaanbaatar is not so much an airport but more an airfield with a few associated buildings. When the Airbus landed, on time after an excellent flight that was well up to the standard of any good international carrier, you could immediately feel the space of the country as well as the warmth and friendliness of the 'locals'. (So much for the 'Maybe It'll Arrive Tomorrow and maybe it won't'). We were met by the representatives from Explore Travel who were to be our companions for the next 6 days whilst we experienced Mongolia from the saddles of 250R Hondas. The short trip from the airport to their base at the local Ger Tourist Camp was interesting enough and set me thinking how were we going to cope with the next few days if all the roads were like this? What would they be like? We started off from the airport on tarmac and within 1 mile we were on the rough, followed by a short length of tarmac and then more rough. Things improved though over the following days as we did not have to deal with the transition from tarmac to dirt so many times. I think we only changed from one to the other about 3 times in the next 800 miles as only about 50 of those miles were on tarmac. This ratio of tarmac to dirt appeared to be the same wherever we were in the country i.e. mostly dirt with tarmac only between the main centres of population, of which there aren't many, and even that tarmac appeared to come supplied with plenty of potholes as standard.

It was evident that our hosts intended to show us as much of their country as was possible in the time we had as the planned itinerary included more than 1 day, in fact 3 of the 6 days were, over 240kms. These seemed rather long days if the roads were not very good so surely those days would include quite a lot of tarmac. No wrong again. In fact one day was over 220 miles, and no tarmac. Now that's a proper trail ride!

The highest point in the country is 4734 metres and the lowest 560 metres so generally the affect of altitude is noticeable for the first couple of days. Annually the average temperature is around zero degrees. Fortunately for us the winter average is minus 25 degrees so when we were there, even though the nights were cold, the days were around 25 degrees. Generally petrol comes in two categories. Most available is 74 octane with 94 octane, which the Hondas preferred, only available very infrequently so special arrangements had to be made. One of our support vehicles had a separate tank for the higher-octane stuff.

That first day was a baptism of fire. As we flew in early morning we did not get out on the road until late morning and it was 9pm before we stopped to set up camp. This was in part due to too long a stop for lunch, which as the week went on became shorter enabling us to erect our tents before it went dark. We were accompanied by a V6 4x4, which carried our daytime gear, and a 5 litre V8 ex Russian army truck that acted as a 'chuck wagon' carrying our tents etc. This met



On the edge of the Gobi National Park. "No problem with ramblers here".  
Photo by Robert & Geoff Wilson

us most lunchtimes and the nights when we needed our tents. Even though our first night in the country seemed a bit of a shambles whilst trying to establish camp in the dark, the first nights experience of camping under a sky which had more stars in it than I have ever seen before was incredible. The nearest we had been before to this type of experience was when motorcycling across Israel, but we had never seen the Milky Way with such clarity ever before, no doubt something to do with the lack of light pollution. This lack of pollution spills over into the countryside where the environment must be as good as anywhere. If, which we did now and again, we found ourselves heading the wrong direction we would just leave the track and strike across open country. The complete absence of fences allows this and it was amazing just what wildlife scattered before your front wheels. The range was from the smallest of rodents through to the largest of birds and everything in between. I suppose the main reason for this vast array of wildlife is because that the majority of Mongolian people are still nomads so there is a complete lack of intensive farming methods. They still graze their stock, which includes camels, goats, horses and yaks, until the grazing becomes poor then move on to pastures new. This moving happens perhaps 5 times a year and they only move 10 or 15 kms and can set up their ger camp in about an hour if need be. Of course being nomadic they have no postal address and do not need the use of maps to navigate around. In fact it is rumoured that each Mongolian has a compass in his or her nose, which is a good job as the two maps we had often contradicted each other.

Even though the nights were by and large clear it is not advisable to ride such roads in the dark as we found out the next night. We had ridden all day on dirt and

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did not arrive at our destination until 11pm. The final 20 miles were along a very iffy track. We were low on petrol and with motorcycles that have direct lighting systems when the engine dies so do the lights. When this happens, as it did to 2 of the 3 machines, you realise just how dark it is when there are just no other lights around. We didn't ride this late again, which was a good thing as some people would be completely phased out if thrown into this situation.

The further south we rode the hotter it became and then on the edge of the Gobi Desert, just inside the National Park of the same name, we set up our tents in an incredibly lush valley! Earlier in the day we had walked into the Eagles Mouth, a gorge that has a permanent glacier in it as no sun ever reaches certain parts. We certainly did not expect to see a glacier in the Gobi Desert region. Quite incredible when only half a days ride away we were climbing the largest of the sand dunes in the Gobi in temperatures so high that you definitely did not need a thermometer to tell you it was hot. There was little or no movement when we rode through the desert, apart from ourselves. We saw quite a few encampments and quite a few camels but very few people and even fewer vehicles. The reason, it was the hottest part of the day and really quite a silly thing to do unless you are into doing silly things. But then we were into silly things hence the climbing of 2000 metre high sand dunes and attempting to ride up them on two wheels. The first was exhilarating, the latter is definitely not to be recommended unless you feel the

need to appreciate how difficult it must be to compete in such as the Dakar and deal with the masses of sand that they have to.

We were primarily camping wild. There are some official sites but it seems more normal not to camp on them and because no one owns any land once outside of the towns or cities there is no objection to going wild, which is truly is a wonderful experience. So in the first week we only stayed twice in ger tourist camps, which are, once outside of the capital, the nearest you get to a hotel. The sleeping accommodation and eating facilities are in ger tents with other facilities in more permanent buildings. The rest of the time, apart from the last two nights in Ulaanbaatar, we camped wherever we were at the end of the day providing we had water close by or with us. Whilst in the south of the country,

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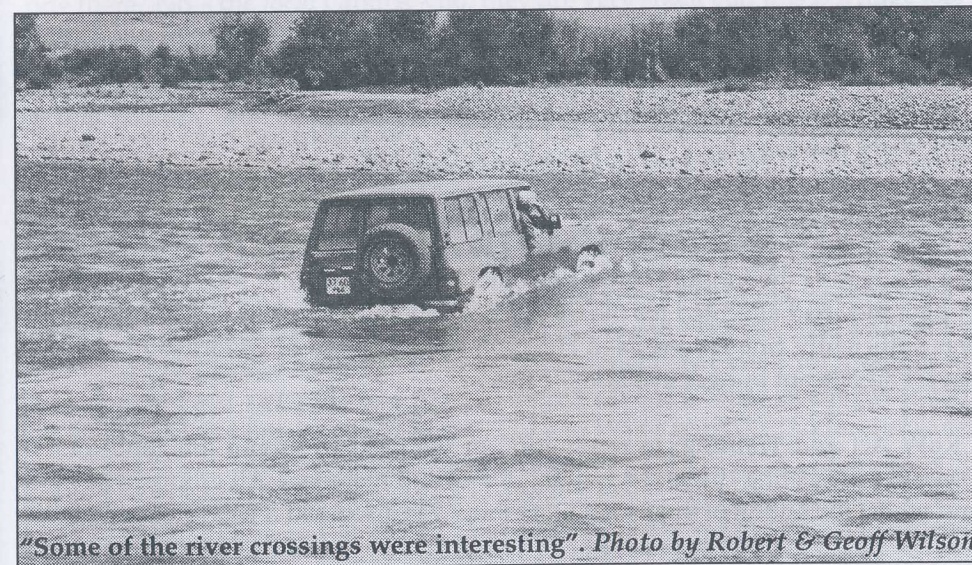
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which tends to be rather dryer than the north especially in the region of the Gobi, we were always careful to have adequate water supplies with us. Further north there are more than enough streams and rivers to provide water. We were always careful to either boil or purify any water we used, yes even for teeth cleaning, and non of us suffered from a bad stomach whilst out in the countryside. I did suffer slightly one day in Ulaanbaatar, which probably tells us how clean the water is out of town or how particular we were about not drinking untreated water. If we didn't boil the water we treat it with iodine tablets and then filtered it with one of the ceramic filters that there are on the market nowadays. The process was time consuming but well worth the trouble and it gives you something to do in the evenings.

So there you have it. Mongolia is in many respects untouched by the rest of the world. It has some of the most unspoiled areas I have ever seen and will remain so for quite some time, as only those with adventure to the fore will dare go there. There are many areas where the comforts of the Western World do not exist and so it is not a country for the faint hearted. Its people are similarly untouched and, as is still found in nations that are mostly nomads, of which there aren't many left elsewhere, they are genuinely friendly, not nosey but interested in other nomads. We found this out quite often, as they were always willing to invite us into their gers (visitors keep to the left please) and offer us their hospitality. Likewise they were always interested in what our nomadic homes were like and hopefully they found our black coffee as palatable as their salted milky tea was to us.

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Robert Wilson 2000



"Some of the river crossings were interesting". Photo by Robert & Geoff Wilson.



## SOUTH WEST REGION: INTO 2001

It is not my wont to senselessly argue against set minds, I would rather that I demonstrate the merit of an opinion through actions – which as trail riders know only too well, speak louder than words. Hence, in the spirit of this sentiment, here is a report from the recent meeting of the South West Region. There, that's the word region twice, and I may even use it again, be warned. Following the withdrawal of the proposal for the TRF to adopt Regionalisation as a way forward (and remember – this was offered at a time when there appeared to be NO way forward for the TRF in its current guise – lack of officers – lack of Group representation etc) at the recent AGM Part 2, several of you may well have expected the regions that were operational to simply give up.

Wrong. The South West have been enjoying (yes – enjoying) these meetings for a decade or so now, we meet twice a year, nearly all Groups (there are 11) are represented by at least one member, we welcome visitors and we even welcome Executive Principal officers – the meeting is a fairly formal forum where just about everyone has as much to offer as they take away with them. And yes we intend to continue meeting, because it works and now, more than at any other time, the need for Groups to collate information, ensure no overlaps or gaps, and to tackle the challenges of the CRoW Act as a whole is paramount. Read on, here follows a brief recap of the ground covered:

**Attending:** 10 out of 11 Groups present plus 2 National Officers.

Matters from 19.11.00 Meeting:

**That letter:** The region expressed regret that the letter sent by the region to the Chairman of the TRF at the 02.12.00 Executive had been taken in the way that it had, as this had not been our intention. This is all behind us now however and we are clearly moving on.

**CoAg Funding:** The Countryside Agency has a brief to take action about the "lost ways" – they are aware of our existence and should surely liaise with us. The Exec is investigating the funding further. Groups were urged to ask their HA what extra budget they had allocated for the CRoW Act generated work and to ask whether it was sufficiently ring fenced. Neil Hennion had enquired of Oxfordshire and they have a significant budget increase for this.

**CRoW Act and Training:** In recognition of the need to submit lots (and lots) of DMMO the meeting discussed training for Group members. All groups were keen and whilst the option of the LARA workshop was discussed it was felt that with the

expertise we have in the SW we could do our own 'in house' training session. Martin Harding will organise this for the end of May, making the most of members' interest and availability while they can't ride their bikes.

**Horse Events:** Jacky German is the new SW Region Horse Event Co-ordinator and Jacky's principal roles will be in publicising our services to all relevant bodies and to hold a diary of events – this way shortages and surpluses of manpower for events may be evened out simply by contacting Jacky. All groups will also work to the same set of issued guidelines though the size of donations will be left to local Groups.

**CRoW Act Users Alliance:** The meeting enquired whether the TRF had advanced the idea promoted at the AGM any further. National Officers reported that the idea was under investigation and more would be known as to the value of an alliance at the next Exec. Be there.

**Foot and Mouth Restraint:** The SW Region will write to the Regional CLA and NFU reminding them of our restraint, offering any assistance and reminding them that we are looking forward to once more enjoying the lanes. Neil Hennion reported that Oxfordshire CC were pleased with the response to the calls for restraint.

**Exmoor National Park:** It was highlighted how important Exmoor is as a trail riding venue to Groups from all over Britain. Exmoor is almost exclusively RUPPs (for us), these will all need to be reclassified, who is going to do it? The Groups that ride there? No – the local Groups – no, they are very small and this is a huge job. It is of course for the National Park to address through its liaison Groups but as of yet – no word. There are reports of restricted byway signs already having been erected.

**The Future of Regionalisation:** Having just had such a productive meeting resulting in several actions; a training day, questions for Groups to ask HAs, raised awareness of problems, distillation and discussion of National issues, the co ordination of our coverage of horse events and doubtlessly more we can only conclude that the SW region will continue – everyone is welcome to attend our meetings and see what they think – and perhaps other Groups may see the value in collaborating and amalgamating the efforts of several Groups – after all, not all Groups have County boundaries to constrain them, we have for example the Swindon nomads – a Group operating in more than one County, dealing with more than one HA, and other regions of England and Wales must also suffer the same.

Just like any other meeting you say – well not really.

*Sally Madgwick*

# THE OLDEST SWINGER IN THE WEST?

This month's front cover shows new Cornwall Group member Des Wickett. Des is an enthusiastic 17 year old who came to us for some honest advice on how to get into trail riding.

After some consultation we suggested the following:

1. Don't buy a new bike to start with. Get something a little more traditional - like a BSA 250/350 with rigid rear end and pedestrian slicing front number plate. Ideally the tyres should not be too aggressive until he gets the hang of it.
2. What to wear? Again giving him the benefit of our years of experience, we told him that you can spend a fortune on unnecessary gear to keep you warm, dry and safe. Wisely, considering his age, he followed our advice and got himself a gaberdine mac, real leather gauntlets, Everoak helmet (rather cool), sports trousers and a pair of very smart lace up brouges. Surprisingly after a few winter trail rides he decided to update the bike and gear.

If any of you believed this codswallop you are more gullible than I thought!

Truth now. Des is 65 on the 30th May. (It isn't a recent photo!) Perhaps you might like to send him a birthday card to Spicers, Poundstock, Cornwall, EX23 0EF. He is a long standing member of the Cornwall Group and really is enthusiastic! He isn't known to miss many runs, particularly trips away in this country or abroad, especially if red wine is involved! (Spain last year, Andorra this year.)

According to his long suffering wife Audrey, she knew when she married him that his first love in life was motorbikes. I can only admire a woman who appreciates that a man has got to get his priorities right.

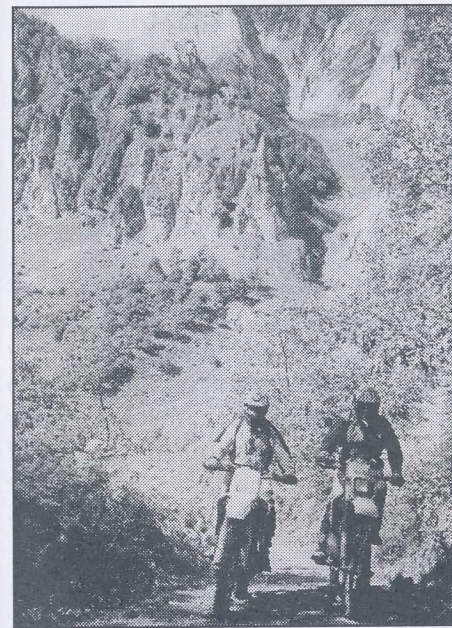
Des I think is a shining example of what we can get from trail riding. He has lots of fun from his trail riding, which he does with great skill (born from years of practice), finds that trail riding keeps him very fit and he enjoys the camaraderie of being with like minded guys, and sometimes gals. I particularly am most pleased to have him in our Group as it means that I am not the oldest! The old guy is a year and a week older than me!

Are there many TRF members trail riding regularly who are even older than Des and me? Let Fred know.

Motorcycling has given each of us nearly 50 years of pleasure so far and we hope for many more to come.

Trail riding in particular has and still does give me enormous pleasure. In fact it is probably the most fun I have had outside which is neither illegal, immoral or fattening!

*Tony Stuart, Cornwall Group*



as the aptly named Cliffhanger, certainly required your full attention!

In six days we managed to ride different areas each day with almost the only duplication being on those lanes nearest to the Hotel. Thankfully no mechanical problems (not even a puncture!) although everybody, except me, complained about the dust that the bikes kicked up and which got everywhere. I don't know - you organise the trip, get them to a first class hotel, lead them every day - and still they grumble!

Once again trail riding in completely different scenery to Cornwall (they grow their hills bigger), nice warm weather, welcoming bars in mountain villages. Heaven or what? I don't think any of us were in a great hurry to come home!

The only question is - where this year?

*Tony Stuart, Cornwall Group*

## PICOS MOUNTAINS

The Cornwall Group had their second trip to the Picos Mountains - in Northern Spain - last September.

The trip got off to a shaky start when the Santander ferry broke down just two days before our trip. We took the alternative route from Plymouth to Roscoff. The journey from Roscoff to Potes was 730 miles instead of the 60 miles from Santander. Not a lot of fun - in one day - for nine of us with two vehicles and trailers loaded with ten bikes (yes, we took a spare!)

The weather stayed good for our six days riding in breathtaking scenery on a great variety of long lanes, which while most were not too challenging, some such

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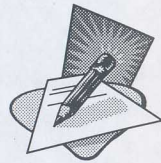
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# LETTERS



## TRF SOUTH WEST REGION HORSE EVENTS

I have recently agreed to be the area co-ordinator for those groups in the South West who wish to boost the TRF coffers by helping out at horse events.

I'm happy to act as a point of contact by logging dates, giving any organisational tips that others have found useful (including paperwork to make the job easier) and keeping a list of volunteers from the region, or elsewhere, whom you might call on if stuck for numbers. Bikes run out of MOT, people fall ill or their commitments change and suddenly there aren't enough riders to cover the course – the idea is that a coordinator might be able to help you avoid such scenarios.

I'd like to hear from anyone who would be interested in riding with a purpose, often in places normally out of bounds, to help out at either Endurance Rides or Horse Trials. All you need is a quietish bike and a horse-

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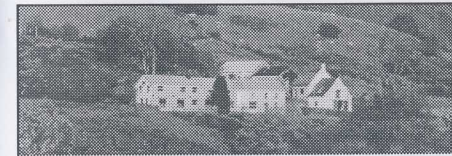
Endurance Rides involve distances of up to 100 miles, marking the route, checking it and removing markers afterwards, as well as trouble-shooting and acting as stewards during the ride. It's hard work but a chance to be on your bike for hours on end, riding tracks through beautiful scenery whilst raising funds for research from the organiser's donation – and you all know how desperately that's needed to safeguard the future of trail riding.

Horse Trials involve riding the cross country jumping course (avoiding horses and jumps) stopping to collect score cards to take to the secretary's tent. This is usually on private land, so maybe the MOT excuse won't count, and is an excellent opportunity to meet others with an interest in countryside access and a relatively easy way for anyone to contribute to the Fighting Fund. We haven't all got the skills, time or inclination to do research but giving up an afternoon to ride your bike in a Horse Trial is a good way to do your bit.

Please contact me ASAP on 01453 751560 or e-mail:  
jgerman@blueyonder.co.uk

*Many thanks, Jacky German. Glos. & W.Mids. TRF*

P.S. Please could any S.W. Group's horse events' officers get in touch about events for later in the year and send any material you may have had published in Horse Event Programmes to publicise the TRF. Thanks.



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## HOW ABOUT THIS?

Five years ago, on the day after Boxing Day, in beautiful high pressure weather, I was leading a West Yorkshire group on a ride in the Dales. At the end of a lane we passed an old house with a 'For Sale' sign nailed onto it. It is the house where I now live. That was a trail riding day that changed the lives of me and my family for all time.

Why not write to Fred our Editor and tell us all of something special that trail riding has brought into your life?

*Wainwright*

# SITUATION VACANT

## GREEN LANE DAY CO-ORDINATOR

Green Lane Day is one pro-active event that we, as users of trails, can positively contribute to the image of our recreation. The last Green Lane Day was cancelled because of Foot and Mouth and has been rescheduled for October 21st 2001 (subject to F&M).

Michael Dyer from the AWDC is standing down as the co-ordinator for Green Lane Day and is looking for somebody willing to take it on.

Is anyone in the TRF interested in taking over the role? Michael says that ideally the person should have journalistic skills or at least ability to write articles highlighting the event for publication in a number of magazines.

Michael can be contacted on (01276) 473907 for informal enquiries and more information about the role. For some time 4 wheel users have filled the co-ordinator's role and perhaps it is our turn to take it over.

*Richard Fordham, LARA Rep.*

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