

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 Sally Madgwick, Tel: 01208 74411
3rd Thurs, The Ship Inn, Wadebridge, 8pm

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 Martin Diamond, Tel: 01202 571325
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 Dave West, Tel: 07768 402424
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, 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, Curry Rivel, Nr. Taunton

SOUTHERN Russ McDermid, Tel: 02380 812371
3rd Tues, The Phoenix, Twyford, Nr. Winchester

SOUTH LONDON & SURREY
Steve Sharp, 0208 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 Julian Ogle, Tel: 020 8579 9778
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: 01225 864187 Mob: 07811 250431
1st Tues, The Bell On The Common, Broughton Gifford

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



Patron: Lord Strathcarron

TRAIL

FEBRUARY, 2002

No. 282

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

EDITOR: Fred Ellison.



Loddon Vale Group members find a use for a Suzuki Djebel headlight on their cold December run. Group members Neil Kemp and John Begley warm their hands around the massive lamp of Group Chairman Colin Patient's 'Jerbil'.

Photo sent in by David Cook

CONTENTS

Editor	3	D.I.Y. Cheap Battery Charger	11
From The Chairman	4	Why Trample On Us?	12
Notice Board	5	Product Test	13
Exec. Meeting Agenda	6	Millstones/Milestones Part 8	14
RoW News	7	Welshman Out West	17
Report from Dave Tilbury	8	Letters	20

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

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- 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.
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- Dave Tilbury, Oakbank Cottage, Oakbank Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 6PA. Tel: 023 8061 8937, E-Mail: dave@hants-lanes.fsnet.co.uk

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

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

E D I T O R

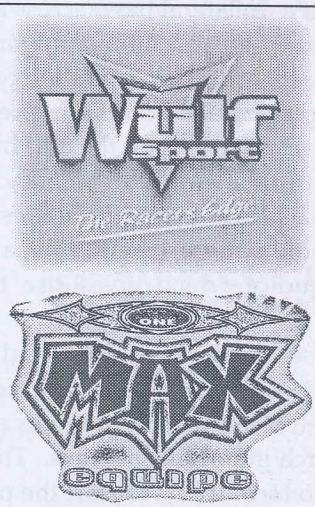
Before I forget, let me remind you that all contributions to Trail must be accompanied by your membership number, name and address. In some instances your details can be withheld in printing, but I must have them before anything can be published.

I have been accused of having a pot at our police force in my January editorial. In fact I had a pot, not at the police, but at the system which appears to trivialise theft from private property.

The NYCC and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority have announced their intention to TRO all the green lanes in the Dales, at a meeting held in Grassington Town Hall on 3rd February. Jon Avison, Head of Park Management, advised us that there would be four trial TROs on lanes yet to be decided. Consultation, as legally required, would take place but the TROs would be implemented regardless. The reason for the TROs - noise in the National Park is inappropriate. (So lets not have any more large coachloads of chattering walkers.)

I have today become the proud owner of a Husquvarna TE610. I just hope I can achieve my ambitions (i.e. ride it!) If anyone has got a spare handbook for this bike or useful information, these would be gratefully received.

Fred Ellison



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STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS

LARA RoW/CRoW ACT Workshop, Northants Area

Saturday 23rd March

Venue: Beefeater Turnpike, Harpole, Northampton. Half mile east of J16 M1.

10am coffee for 10.30 am start.

Delegate fee: £5 TRF members & LARA associates, £10 all others.

(Cheques payable to South Northants TRF).

Lunch, bar meals/snacks available.

To book contact Rob Balderson

Tel/Fax 01604 494947 or

e-mail rbalderson@standrew.co.uk

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I don't know how many of you have had the chance or even the inclination to see the Lord of the Rings. However there are occasions when I feel like Frodo (the ring carrier) with the fellowship (The Executive) helping me on my quest, which finds our heroes facing all sorts of difficulties and dangers but along the way meeting with those who offer help and assistance. Enough of this reverie.

Progress towards meeting with DEFRA is being made and a meeting has been arranged for the 22nd February. The BBTC (the Byways and Bridleways Trust Council previously the TUA) has already met with them and had a positive reception. Let us see what progress can be made.

At the end of January there were two major threats to trail riding in Derbyshire and the North Yorkshire Dales. Both Councils are threatening to impose Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) on a large number of lanes. This is being proposed without pursuing the correct consultation process with those users who would be affected adversely (notwithstanding that the council claims it is doing so). There has already been one meeting in Grassington to express, in no uncertain terms, the dissatisfaction of the affected people about this high handed and possibly unauthorised action (TROs are a means of management, available to councils, once all their other obligations and duties have been fulfilled but there remains a problem). However to impose them on a unilateral basis across a large area may well be an abuse of power and a device to address a situation brought about, I would suggest, by an unwillingness or inability, on the part of the council, to cope with the job with which they are charged, combined with a prejudice against particular types of countryside user. Your Executive is on the case but any additional help would be most welcome. These are only two recent instances but I have no doubt are indicative of a trend to come, so please be aware. Interestingly, the imposition of TROs will not prevent or inhibit those bikers who already disregard the law and cause a lot of the prejudice which gives rise to this inappropriate reaction.

Finally a word of congratulations to all those involved with the production and publication of the booklet called 'How to claim a Byway' a copy of which you have all received during January. It has been well received and provides a good starting point for anyone involved with the research into rights of ways. The next step is for groups, some have already done this, to form teams to start the process of research in the counties in which they ride to prove the provenance of these lanes and to file Byway claims where vehicular routes are recorded as footpaths, bridleways, or RuPPs on the Definitive Map.

Happy Riding.

André Confavreux, National Chairman

NOTICE BOARD

INTERESTED?

Herts/Essex borders based rider (Much Hadham) looking to find others interested in mid-week off-road rides.

Please call Nick on 01920 468066 or e-mail: sysint@dial.pipex.com

TRF AGM 2002

Every year members appear fearful of attending the AGM because they don't want to be lumbered with a 'job'. This year we want it to be different.

We want to walk into the AGM knowing that there are sufficient members available to carry out the Exec. Officer posts and that those volunteers have the support they may need already in place.

Do give some thought to how you might help the TRF and the terms under which you would be prepared to turn that offer into a productive reality for the TRF.

Call or e-mail André or any of the Executive Committee to discuss.

SOUTH WEST REGION OF TRF

1st meeting of 2002 - Saturday 13th April at Puriton Village Hall.
10am for 10.30am start. All TRF members welcome.

Agenda items to be with Reuben Alcock (01749 679013) by end of March.

ATTENTION ALL TEESSIDE & NORTH YORKS MEMBERS

**"SPECIAL EVENT" "On Your Bike in North Yorkshire 2002"
SUNDAY MAY 5th 2002 (May Day Weekend)**

This is a unique event in the Teesside and North Yorkshire Group calendar. The format will be a One Day "Navigation Scatter"/"Rally of Discovery" type event, with pairs of riders, using road legal off-road bikes, including an evening social event at a licensed venue.

Numbers will be limited with a lot of interest being shown at the January Meeting.

For further information and an official entry form (even if you were at the January T&NY Group meeting) send a Stamped Self Addressed envelope to:
Frank Kitching, 88 Newton Road, Great Ayton, Middlesbrough,
North Yorks, TS9 6DG.

Meeting of the TRF Executive

Saturday 9th March 2002 10 am for 10.30

Longford Travel Inn, Tewkesbury Road, Longford, Gloucester GL2 9BE
West bound A40, junction 11 M5 01452 523519

Agenda

Chairman's Welcome

Apologies

Approval of Minutes of 01.12.01 Meeting

Matters Arising

Substantive Issues:

Incorporation (AGC)

Officer Succession (AGC/DT)

Group Funds and Group Returns (AGC)

Elected Officers Reports

Finance (JG)

Membership (JP)

Public Relations (RD)

Rights of Way (DT)

Subordinate Issues:

Exhibitions (SS)

Disclaimer for Maps (DT)

Status Reports:

Lost Ways Project - Co Ag Funding (TS)

Byways and Bridleways Trust Council (formally TUA) (DT)

Affiliation to Scotways (JP)

Display Equipment (CP)

Merchandising (JH)

Any Other Business

Whilst every effort is made to accommodate AOB it is often difficult to give sufficient time at the end of a meeting to do justice to topics. You are asked therefore to restrict AOB to a minimum. However should there be something of sufficient importance to merit time for discussion in the body of the meeting you must advise the secretary well in advance with any supporting papers.

NOTE: The agenda for the March Meeting has been restyled to help progress the business of the meeting, thus allowing proportionally more time for those issues on which decisions have to be taken.

Readers confused by the initials are referred to the officer list on the inside cover of Trail.

RoW NEWS

MAKING THE BEST OF BYWAYS

- A Practical Guide On Managing The Use Of Vehicles On Public Rights Of Way

Even after Regulations on the CRoW Act, 95% of this DEFRA/DETR booklet will still be valid. It applies to ALL unsealed ways with public vehicular rights, not just BOATs.

It is effectively Government advice to Highway Authorities, and you can encourage your HA to follow this Guide. Also useful to give to people in other user groups.

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Report from **Dave Tilbury**

The highlight of the month for me was a couple of days at the Great Munden Public Inquiry in Hertfordshire. Whilst Peter Millman and his team from Hertfordshire CC had done a superb job on their proof of evidence to support BOAT status over four RUPPs, including the infamous '13', they had not quite got to grips with the practical issues of a Public Inquiry. In short the Inquiry was held in Great Munden village hall where it was cold, and I mean COLD, and the facilities were 'lacking' – and this extended to the absence of bog roll in the toilets! The ultimate insult came half way through Friday when the heating gave up completely. Please Peter, in future at least a photocopier.

With regard to RUPP 13 the major landowner, Mr Hedderson, was asserting that there were no public rights over the route at all. Dr Yolanda Hodson, Edwin Simpson QC, Mrs. M Masters (star of the Channel 4 programme Dangerous Walks*) and Andy Dunlop were in attendance to help Mr Hedderson refute four hundred years of history. I found it sad that someone as respected as Dr Hodson should present a highly speculative interpretation of map evidence, due largely to a limited understanding of highway law. I'm sure that she did not intentionally provide the Inspector with a misleading and inaccurate submission. Our man on the scene, Colin Adlam, has done a good job but judging from the GLEAM presence we will be looking at a rerun if the Inspectors finds any BOATs.

I attended a CCPR* 'Recreation in the countryside for all' seminar. Much of what I heard was of no consequence to our interests but one speaker, Rob Cook – the English Nature SSSI Project Manager – did awaken a few in the audience. This prompts me to suggest that the TRF consider an approach to EN with a view to drawing up a memorandum of understanding that covers our recreation in order that we are less likely to fall foul of local 'conservation' zealots. It was also interesting to note that existing use should not be effected by SSSI designation. (I was not wearing my TRF hat at this seminar.)


No more can we refer to the TUA. At a meeting in Loughborough on 27 January 2002 the final details of the link with the Byways and Bridleways Trust were ratified. The proposal to call the TUA the BBT Advisory Committee was altered, to fall in line with aims and objectives, to the Byways and Bridleways Trust Council (BBTC).

The BBTC shall be formed from representatives of the user groups identified in the original TUA, as formed in 2001, plus the BBT Trustees. Robert Halstead (National Federation of Bridleway Associations) was elected Chair of

the BBTC and the meeting proceeded to address a number of issues that should secure a future for this body. I am please to also report that a number of us came away from that meeting with tasks that may well be to our benefit in the long term. The TRF were congratulated on the production of How to Claim a Byway, with other organisations asking if they could use the material for their own groups. The TRF were also thanked for their contribution to the formation of this new pressure group.

It appears that there is some slippage in the DEFRA timetable with regard to RBs and the amendment of s.34a. Despite the promise of a return call (twice) I have made little progress in arranging a meeting with DEFRA where the TRF can put our views to those drafting the statutory instruments.

There is still a need for photos and reports of surface condition on the Ridgeway. That well know trend-setter and newspaper editor, Janet Street-Porter, has found time to write about the horrific damage inflicted by trail riders on the Ridgeway but I doubt that she had the time to walk it to see for herself, judging from the article. If she wants to see a footpath in poor condition there is one in my Parish which will see a walker sink to their tender parts, due to poor drainage and horses (not a wheel mark in sight). And what about the missing footbridges over the river Avon near Salisbury? There are thousands of serious and dangerous deficiencies in the footpath network but this 'hack' has



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only time to denigrate other rights of way users. The serious rights of way user might not see her article as a productive use of paper and ink. It appears that Chris Braisher has also joined with Ms Street-Porter and some well known mountaineer. When next you buy walking boots ask if you need to contribute to the profits of one who would selfishly seek to preclude you from one of the widest lanes in southern England.

Whilst on the subject of being precluded I can report that I am having a look at Derbyshire County Councils attitude toward trail bike use over lanes in the hills. Initial responses indicate that the TRF need to look at the weight of evidence held for some of the alleged higher rights that are being asserted. There are two points to be considered here. Our integrity will be questioned if we use definitive routes, other than BOAT, where we cannot produce a solid case for so doing. We also stand to take a hammering in the courts if we continue to use routes that do not have cogent evidence of carriageway rights. More than at any time in the past we need to be very sure we are right.

During January I have identified a number of small tasks that need addressing but sadly have not stumbled upon anyone that is prepared to take them on. If you feel you have something to offer, please call or send me an e-mail. If there is a message that needs to be conveyed to the TRF membership and, for that matter, rights of way users in general, it is that there is a pressing

need to face up to the challenges presented by the CROW Act. This will take more in time than the current executive has to realistically offer. Think about it. A couple of hours spent on rights of way issues this year or look for a new hobby. It could be that simple.

*This programme, screened about three years ago, shows the fragrant Marlene Masters and her son telling walkers and an equestrian that there is no right of way over a RUPP. This Maperton RUPP was ploughed and planted with turnips, with hedges grubbed out. It is now a BOAT and one that I have yet to ride.

* CCPR = Central Council for Physical Recreation

Dave Tilbury

Nevada Motorcycle Adventures

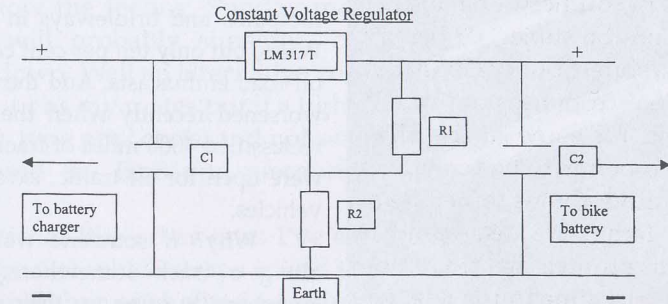
The trail riding adventure of my life!

The best trails, I seriously doubt if they come any better anywhere in the world. We crossed deserts, rivers and climbed mountains. The scenery, varied, stunning, something you have to experience to appreciate. Views, absolutely awesome. From day one I was absolutely gobsmacked by the sheer beauty of this vast wilderness. The mountains were magnificent. We mere mortals can only stand in awe when privileged to witness such scenery. Perceptions of Nevada as "Death Valley" quickly dispelled. This trip was not all biking. Saloons always had at least one character. There is much more I could say about this trip. If you have even a drop of Castrol R in your blood then get out there and experience it for yourself. Me, I'm going back as soon as I've got enough brownie points with the wife. From: "Welshman Out West" by Mike Rees, published in *Off-Road Review*.

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Fear not, help is at hand. Happiness is a hot soldering iron and a chance to practice your DIY skills.

Purchase a cheap mains voltage converter from your local market trader/cheapo-shop. Cost around £2. Components for regulator come from Maplins or local electronic supplier. Cost a couple of quid.

Cheap voltage converters are usually rated at 300 milliamps but are not regulated, hence the above circuit. The rate of charge is very slow so there is next to no gassing of the battery. This means the charger can be left on for long periods and the battery remains fully charged.

I have car-type auxillary sockets connected to the batteries of my bikes, to speed up connection, but crocodile clips (from Maplins) are an alternative.

A small piece of printed circuit board keeps the regulator wiring neat and small boxes can be easily obtained. I used a copper heat sink on early versions but there is not enough heat generated to make this essential.

Have fun, Rodger Davies

why trample on our off-roaders?

by Jeremy Clarkson - the funniest writer on the road



With the foot and mouth crisis now pretty well over and the countryside reopened for business, I should imagine the bobble-hatted ramblers will be more determined than ever to make it all their own.

Having won their right to roam, these beardies in their big red socks will now be stepping up their campaign to abolish farming, forestry, Army manoeuvres, shooting, shaving and driving at more than 40mph on country roads.

So people who like to drive around the country's green bits in their four wheel drive cars have pretty well had it.

Now, quite frankly, I'd rather eat my own knees than spend a day up to my backside in mud, trying to get some crappy old Land Rover to the top of a hill.

I've done off-road work before and I know that two things will happen. I will get stuck and I will break the car. So I will come home dirty, poor, worn out and as often as not, on foot.

As far as I'm concerned this so-called "green laning" is the daftest hobby on God's earth. After golf and rambling.

But I cannot see a single reason why it should be stopped.

At present, there are 130,000 miles of footpaths and bridleways in England and Wales, but only ten per cent can be used by off-road enthusiasts. And the situation was worsened recently when the Government reclassified 4000 miles of track, saying they were open for all traffic, except motorised vehicles.

Why? If someone wants to bump along a track somewhere, miles from anywhere, burning up their own fuel and smashing their own suspension what business is that of mine or yours? I mean, ramblers already have more than 100,000 miles of footpath where cars are not allowed and, surely to God, that's enough.

They say cars chew up the ground but so do horses.

They say cars break fences but then I happen to know that most of the organised green lane clubs spend most of their time rebuilding them again.

They say cars are noisy but so are tractors, so are crow scarers and corn driers.

The countryside is a deafening place so I can't see that a car makes much of a difference. They also say cars are an eyesore but I for one would far rather see a nice green Range Rover bumbling along a country track than some git in a bright orange anorak.

Let me put it this way. I live within a mile of a model aeroplane flying club and sure, the din is a nuisance on a peaceful Sunday afternoon. But should it be banned?

Of course not, because if you banned everything that caused a problem to someone, you'd have to ban everything.

Article taken from 'The Sun' and sent in by Paul Cadman, West Yorkshire TRF

PRODUCT TEST

IXON ONE PIECE WATERPROOF COVERALL

You know the feeling, Sunday morning dawns. Saturday it sunshined, Monday it will probably sunshine, but Sunday, yes, you guessed it, its chucking it down. Well an alternative could be at hand. Now me having to ride on a budget, or as my mates put it a tight git, a cheaper alternative to the mega bucks M.S.R. type gear costs, and not wanting to look like a commando out on patrol, I found the Ixon one piece coverall at Rockets Aprillia Centre in Blackburn.

Now its not like other ones I've seen. It's quite thick and tear proof. It folds into a pocket which straps round you like a bum bag. You don't sweat in it, well no more than anybody does when you're hauling your bike out of two feet of sloppy Yorkshire bog. And the price £35, yes, just £35. Brilliant after a day of torrential rain, deep puddles, river crossings and a heavy spattering of mud. Cheers Stu, I'll get you next time! I kept warm and more importantly dry. So summing up, it's light, easily carried, tear resistant, waterproof, comfortable and excellent value.

John Hargreaves, Ribble Valley Group

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MILESTONES/MILLSTONES OF MOTORCYCLING

PART 8 IN THE FRAME

Derek Rickman once stated that he designed the frame for his famous Metisse motorcycles by simply drawing lines around an engine. This, like many motorcycle stories, is probably apocryphal and les freres Rickman were not above making the little joke, since Metisse is French for 'mongrel'.

The first motorcycle frames were really bicycle frames with an engine attached. After putting engines over the front wheel, over the back wheel, in the wheel etc., it finally ended up in the place where the pedals used to be, and quite right too. Thus originated the 'diamond' frame, which is not in the shape of a diamond but two triangles stuck together. Confused? Never mind.

Time for a bit of engineering theory. How many uses can you think of for a frame?

1. Something to put an engine in to fill the gap..
2. Something to hang suspension and various bits and pieces from.
3. It stops the wheels from heading in different directions.
4. Something to use up half a can of black paint on.
5. I give up, but you get the idea.

In the early days of motorcycles most frames looked the same, in any colour you wanted, as long as it was black. However, it was not long before the intense(ish) competition forced manufacturers to try to make their machines look different from their rivals. Enter D.O.T., Devoid Of Trouble, if you believe the hype (The first acronym? even earlier than B.M.C., Business Must Collapse). The DOT frame was made entirely out of straight tubing and came with the slogan, 'Built like a bridge'. The idea was that a triangle is a very strong structure, so why not put lots of them together? Also, if you put bends in

tubes it weakens them, so straight tubes were used throughout. Q.E.D.

When most bikes had proprietary engines from Villiers, J.A.P., or Blackbourne, they could only be made to look different by tank badge design or, maybe, just possibly, a different type of frame. Coventry Eagle made a pressed steel frame, a material that would disappear, only to reappear, mysteriously, years later on a tiny Japanese machine. Ner-a-Car, as its name suggests, combined car-style bodywork with the normal functions of a frame. Strange that it never caught on. Maybe with another pair of wheels, a bigger engine and doors?

Making a frame do more jobs than just to hold the bike together is a desirable thing to achieve. Phil Vincent managed to this very well, to the extent that Vincent frames contained the engine oil as well as being minimalist in the extreme. Nice one Phil.

The most famous frame in motorcycle design is the Norton 'Featherbed'. By careful attention to bracing around the headstock and employing widely spaced frame tubes, handling and steering were elevated to a new level. Even with a power disadvantage, Nortons were capable of winning races, due to their superior frame design. Thus the concept of a complete 'package' was born, in which all elements of the motorcycle had to work together. It was no longer enough to have a hugely powerful engine in a poor frame. This concept

was totally ignored by all four Japanese companies in their powerful road racers of the 60's and 70's. Mike Hailwood's T.T. win on a 500 Honda 4 showed that it requires talent and courage in superhuman amounts to overcome the deficiencies of a frame with a hinge in the middle. The big two strokes of the other three Japanese manufacturers showed up frame deficiencies even further, as power outputs rose.

On the road, the same problems occurred, with Kawasaki's flagship Z1 requiring a brave person to ride it at anything near its potential. Suzuki showed the way with its worthy but dull U.J.M. (Universal Japanese Motorcycle) 4 cylinder range, that actually handled well.

Early experiments with aluminium beam frames, from the Bakker stable,

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were quickly copied by Yamaha and the others. The design meant that, because the section of the beam could be changed, the frame could be effectively strengthened at major stress points, while remaining light. When transferred to road machinery it also looked nice and gave owners something to polish. Any colour you like as long as it is shiny and silvery. Even steel frames were made to look like aluminium with judicious use of aluminium spray paint.

Off-road the development of lightweight frames has been slow and sporadic. BSA, a company not noted for its liberal use of money in R & D, astounded the world with a titanium frame for its 500 G.P. moto-cross machine in the 60's. It was a disaster due to the amount of frame flex and the difficulty in making repairs. Titanium needs to be welded under special, inert gas conditions not generally found in muddy paddocks. However, use of exotic alloys helped drive a desire for weight saving, resulting in works Suzukis weighing in at about 180 Kilos. This then caused a minimum weight limit for safety and the initiative to change frame design was lost. Recently Hondas have introduced aluminium beam frames for their moto-cross machinery but, I suspect, more as a styling exercise than for any technical advantage, since none of the other manufacturers have followed suit. In trials we now have diminutive works of art, made out of plastic and aluminium alloy. Here, the use of the aluminium beam frame has contributed to the breaking of the 70 Kg. barrier - for the whole bike! So there.

Ducatis tend to be different and make a style statement. Their trellis-type frame has stood the test of time in being light, simple to produce and repair, as well as being minimalist and downright sexy.

Question. What is the best type of frame?

Answer. No frame at all.

Is this possible? Certainly, since we have been moving steadily in that direction for some time now.

Bimota's Tesi ('thesis' in Italian) showed that you can hang all the major components from a strong, load bearing engine. BMW's latest range of flat twins have suspension mounted on the engine and an attenuated frame to hang minor components from. Using the engine as a stress bearing unit has been common practice in car racing technology, since the partnership between Lotus and Cosworth so, why not with bikes?

Now, with the increasing use of carbon fibre technology, we could soon see a tank/seat assembly becoming a stressed unit, replacing the frame and the engine supplying the rest of the support. Exciting prospect huh! But what about all those half-used tins of black enamel?

Rodger Davies

W.O.W. (Welshman Out West)

by Mike Rees, from Wales.

This story was published in 'Off Road Review' and 'Trail' magazines (U.K.)

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

By now you may have gathered that I have been on what I consider to be the trail riding adventure of a lifetime. I managed to avoid the rattlesnakes, mountain lions, grizzly bears, gun-toting cowboys, casinos, and enormous portions of food and so live to tell the tale. Now I am not the first to write about Nevada Motorcycle Adventures in this magazine, but in all honesty the earlier reports really did not do it justice. No doubt the earlier scribes were all better riders than writers. I, on the other hand, *know* my riding is rubbish!

All great adventures have problems. Mine started when I arrived at San Francisco airport but my luggage (including riding gear) did not. The phrase *Dam A----* comes immediately to mind. I arrived at Reno ready to start six days of trail riding through deserts and mountains splendidly equipped with crash hat, corded jeans, a pair of trainers and one small bag of underwear. I need not have worried. Matt Ernst phoned United Airlines on my behalf. He got them to promise to deliver my luggage, and then, did what they would not, got me riding by producing some gear for me to use in the interim.

From then on my fortunes changed and I had the motorcycle adventure of my life. Now this Matt Ernst is a real trail-riding enthusiast. As well as being a keen motorcyclist he clearly is a man whose soul is in sympathy with the land. He spent years exploring the old gold miners roads, stagecoach roads and trails in Northern Nevada before starting as a fully licensed (and fully equipped) motorcycle guide. He now has access to 20,000 miles of trails in an area the size of Wales. You get bike, fuel, food, accommodation on a guided tour of some of the best trails in Nevada and I seriously doubt if they come any better anywhere in the world!

The group's luggage was transported in a huge 4-wheel drive truck towing a six-bike trailer with a spare bike. Every morning his mechanic would refuel and check over the bikes so all we riders had to do was press the magic button to fire up the motors. The bikes were Suzuki DR350's shod with knobbies, and fitted with long range plastic tanks. Each morning after breakfast Matt would spend 15 minutes or so on the phone to his numerous contacts around the state gathering the latest

information on the state of the trails before deciding on the days route and final destination. If necessary, he even has friends prepared to jump in an airplane to check out the trails.

Each day we would cover 10 to 150 miles of trails varying from deserts to mountains 10,000 feet high. His knowledge of the geology, geography and history of the area is as vast as the country itself. It seemed as if every other hour we would stop somewhere, be it at a ghost town, abandoned mine or mountaintop, and Matt would reel off some interesting anecdote about the place. We crossed the deserts where gophers burrowed, rode the plains where wild horses roamed, forded rivers where fish swam and climbed mountains where eagles soared. In the morning we could be up in the snow line and by the afternoon we were bathing in a "hot spring" in the middle of a desert sipping ice cold beer (the back-up truck didn't just carry spare bikes and lunch! - them Americans also like the simple pleasures in life).

The scenery was as varied as it was stunning. The view from the mountain tops is something you have to experience to appreciate. The Americans tend to use the word "Awesome" almost as slang for something which is just one notch up from OK but to my mind the views from the mountain tops was absolutely awesome in the true meaning of the word. From day one I was absolutely gobsmacked by the sheer beauty of this vast wilderness. The mountains were as magnificent as any around Glen Coe but there were much, much more of them. The desert could be as lonely as Monks Trod at dusk when your bike has broken down. We mere mortals can only stand in awe when privileged to witness such scenery. Like Matt, I pray to God the rich spoiled Yahoos from neighboring California don't despoil this magnificent wilderness.

Matt can take up to a dozen riders in a party but prefers a few less so he can give more personal attention. Our group comprised six friendly Yanks from various parts of the East Coast and one Welshman - me. The others were from various locations on the East Coast and their preconceptions of Nevada as a "Death Valley" were quickly dispelled. Gary, Ben, Alex, Deke, Todd and Brandi were all experienced Hare Scramblers (Hare and Hound this side of the pond). Todd was the quickest, and in the States he races in the A class, which is one below the AA reserved for professionals. Brandi is a lass destined to give many lads an inferiority complex. She combines brains (final stages of a masters degree, planning to work for the FBI etc.) and beauty and can ride like the devil. She won the award for the best "Endo" of the week when she got cross-threaded through some muddy ruts in a big way. I still can't make up my mind to congratulate or commiserate with a gal who can get her legs that far apart whilst upside-down and hanging on to the handlebar of a wayward Suzuki DR350. To brains and beauty you can add guts. Within minutes she was back on the bike drifting the back end round every corner.

I went at my own pace preferring to see the scenery rather than the inside of an American hospital. But they were a great bunch and one would always wait at each crossroad/junction to show the way. They loved big steep hills and would charge up them in typical scrambler style - I just rode up in the trials style - standing up, tongue on the front mudguard using the throttle to find grip. I got everywhere they could

only just a little (well, sometimes a lot) later. Although they were much quicker, they were happy for me to go a speed I was comfortable with. We all had plenty of time to rest and take photos whenever we needed. Occasionally Matt would send the "hares" up some dead-end climb just to burn off steam while the "tortoises" took time out to soak up the scenery.

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

Amongst his many other talents Matt was also a weather expert. Often when we would pause on the top of a mountain to admire the view he would be looking across the plains below to the distant horizon to predict with accuracy just where and how fast any storm clouds were going. With 20,000 miles to choose from we just went somewhere else. Only once did we get caught in a rainstorm. Heading across a valley bottom dirt road to our lunch stop the temperature suddenly dropped to just above freezing and the heavens opened up with a vengeance. Being a seasoned Welch trail rider I never go far from home without my leggings so having brought them 6,000 miles I thought it was time to use them. The rest of the group were not so prepared and pushed on hoping to outrun the rain. I was the only dry, cheerful rider with the sense to expect rain.

With the bad weather now clearly in for the day most opted to trailer their bikes to the motel and ride in the support truck. Todd, Gary and myself did the manly thing and rode our bikes back. Yes folks, take it from me, America is a BIG place. It was one of those rare motorcycling experiences which we three can look back on with pride and wonder why we were daft enough to volunteer in the first place.

But this trip was not all biking. At the end of every day we would park up the bikes and stroll into a saloon, muddy boots and all. Only later would we bother to change into casuals and return for our evening meal and yet more "social interchange." The saloons always had at least one character. One night we sat drinking with a cowboy wearing a ten-gallon hat and a loaded six gun. Believe me, he was not a one off. They claim the guns are for rattlers but judging by the amount of guns I saw, rattlesnakes will soon be an endangered species. Another saloon was crammed full of bric-a-brac dating back to the early twenties. The newest thing there was last years' dust! The place was run more as a vocation than an occupation by a 70 year old former sailor named Dick. He was great. He could sum up the character of any new customer within 15 seconds. If he liked you, you could drink till dawn. If he did not, he would more than likely throw you out after the first drink. He kept a shotgun behind the bar to persuade those reluctant to depart.

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

Sent in by Matthew Ernst

LETTERS



RE: FLOWER SCAR ROAD, TODMORDEN

I have received a consultation document from the Todmorden Moor Trust who are proposing to gate the above road to prevent illegal tipping.

I have said to the trust that instead of gating the road and prejudicing the rights of legitimate vehicle users, that they should work with the user groups in making people more vigilant.

Could any members who witness tipping whilst using this lane please contact the local police and give what details they can.

Richard Fordham, Rossendale, Lancashire

THE LATEST FROM SOMERSET

The RoW Improvement Plan will involve an assessment of the needs of different classes of user, and the consultation from the Government on this states

that in making this assessment we should consider the opportunities for cycling, harness-horse driving, horse riding and walking other than on roads used mainly by motor vehicles, and links in the network that would enable people to avoid having to use such roads. Whilst this does not specifically mention the needs of the motorised off-road user, routes that are suitable for harness-horse driving will be the sort of routes traditionally used by the TRF. There is a hint in the consultation that the legislation may be amended to enable the dedication of at least restricted byways, and possibly full byways. We will have to wait and see on this, but it would make things a lot easier if we could enter into dedication agreements with landowners for

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byways. We did have one recently where the landowner needed to move a RuPP and was prepared to dedicate a new route as a byway, but the legislation simply does not allow this at the moment.

The TRF needs to join forces with the bridleway groups to pressure Government to make provision for their interests or I agree with you that there is a danger that your ability to access the countryside on a motorbike will be severely restricted.

Rowena Smith, Group Manager, RoW Department, Somerset

INTERESTING JANUARY ARTICLES

I read with interest some of the articles in the January TRAIL. I agree with J. Robinson's letter about lane clearing, maybe groups could organise ride outs on lanes which need light work doing and have the benefit of a good ride and the satisfaction of doing something worthwhile. I've not tried carrying my chainsaw on the back of my bike, but no doubt most of the work would need nothing more than a couple of saws and about half an hours work every month or so.

R. Alcock's experience of his French trail riding was interesting, as I am doing a similar thing in March in Normandy with the people who advertise in

TRAIL. Are any other TRF members considering doing this? I may even write an article, share my experiences and bore you all to death.

Mike Kirby's recent move to France is something I will be doing myself this year (although Normandy is not as hot, not a bad thing on a trail bike) and I will be doing as much riding as possible. Anyone have any tips or do's and don'ts?

Finally, I need to say a big thank you to Rodger Davies for having a sense of humour in his mad ramblings every month. For those who don't know him, he is a teacher (lock up your children) and gets his pupils out and about to do allsorts of motorbike activities in the name of education, surely the best way to get youngsters into bikes. I got my



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first bike when I was 12 and my teachers would have gladly put me in a "special" home if they knew. No-one said life was fair.

David J. Punshon, Lancashire Group

THE YOUNG GIRL IN THE PARIS-DAKAR RALLY

Your correspondent in January's issue of TRAIL reports having seen a young girl (no. 125) struggling with her bike in the Paris-Dakar Rally. I can advise that the girl in question is Annie Seel from Sweden. Those of us who have been on a Moto-Adventures trip to either Morocco or Andorra will know Annie who acts as a guide on these trips and they will tell you she can't half ride a bike. Annie competed in the Dakar for the first time this year and made it to the finish. No mean feat!

Incidentally I would recommend Moto Aventures trail riding holiday in Andorra to anyone - and no, I'm not being paid for the free plug!

Peter Allt, Derby

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