

## 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** Ian Sadler, Tel: 01884 821547  
2nd Wed, The Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham, A396 1 mile north of Tiverton

**GLOUCESTER** Charlie Morriss, Tel: 01453 885323  
1st Wed, The Wagonworks Sports & Social Club, Tuffley Ave., 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** Brian Crabtree, Tel: 01200 426824  
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 Ogley, 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 704888  
1st Tues, The Bell On The Common, Broughton Gifford

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



Patron: Lord Strathcarron

# TRAIL

APRIL, 2002

No. 284

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

EDITOR: Fred Ellison.



Dave Hicks and Mike Sewell at the Goodwood Horse Trials.

Photo by Mike Collins, Sussex

## CONTENTS

Editor	3	RoW News	11
Notice Board	4	...and now the simple version	12
Medical Appliance Review	5	A Little Cracker	13
Executive Meeting Report	6	Exmoor Run Report	14
From The Chairman	9	My 50th B'day Dream Holiday	15
Report from Dave Tilbury	10	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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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.*



Having now done a couple of trail rides on the big Husky (610TE) the fear is changing to 'I think I'm going to like it'. Light at 259lb, pulls your arms out at 800rpm and good suspension makes for a sort of 'character ride' not as easy as a little and nimble two stroke but with lots of good vibrations. Like all good trail bikes puts a smile on your face!

What's wrong with you fellows? There is still room for a few more riders in the 'On Your Bike In North Yorkshire' weekend, which I understand is a bit like a treasure hunt, in some of Britain's finest riding country with lots of Yorkshire hospitality so don't hesitate, ring Frank Kitchin or Paul Suggit NOW!!

*Fred Ellison*

## TRF STAND AT THE MOTORCYCLE SHOW

We are looking into having a TRF stand at this years Motorcycle Show. It will be held at Birmingham NEC from 14th - 24th November 2002. I am trying to gauge how many TRF people would be prepared to help. We need people to organise/co-ordinate the stand and/or to help run the stand. If you are interested would you please indicate how you would be able to help and for how many days.

Please contact Steve Sharp Tel: 020 8773 4202 h or 020 8666 4204 day/work or Mobile 07710 012712 or e-mail [steve.j.sharp@bt.com](mailto:steve.j.sharp@bt.com)

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or Paul Suggit 01642 723398 after 5pm

**ENTRIES BY 26TH APRIL 2002**

# NOTICE BOARD

## SPRING COMPETITION

Guess which Executive Officer recently filled his trail bike with diesel?

Answers on a postcard to John Pritchard.

## RIDERS EXPERIENCES

Pat Bullen is looking for riders experiences of Yamaha TTR250s or XT225 (Serows).

Your experiences and tips with these and other bikes would be of interest to other TRF members.

Please send your input to The Editor.

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## TRAIL RIDES FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

Saturday 18th May 2002 at Cwmcarn  
Scenic Drive, Gwent 1pm.

Mike Rees is organising his annual day out for mentally handicapped children and needs more riders/bikers/sidecars to take them around a two mile lap of forest trails.

Rear footrest and a spare helmet needed. Free burgers and drink to all. If you can help ring him on 01495

222728 or e-mail:

[Mikerees65@hotmail.com](mailto:Mikerees65@hotmail.com)

# Medical Appliance Review

What I intend to write, over several episodes, is a write up on products that I have bought and tested and approved or disapproved. The following is a product that I have only purchased recently, but as a consequence of an injury sustained as a result of riding at a pace not normally associated with green laning.

I entered my first rally after a colleague had injured himself during an enduro, such that his entry in the 2001 Hafren Rally was mine for the taking. Having never entered such an event I prepared myself for every conceivable situation that I could think of ie. decent lid, back protector, padded knee pads, water cell backpack etc. What I was not ready for was the severe twisting and tearing of a muscle that the family doctor only gets to diagnose from those who play squash. Being advised that muscle injections were one option if the muscle were not to mend, I looked very carefully at the Proline leaflet that came with the padded elbow supports that I had bought on a previous occasion. As the free catalogue from the manufacturer stated, the body support products are meant for those who have already sustained an injury, but who would prefer not to exacerbate the problem any further. At first I thought that the MUSTANG hinged knee braces were a little overkill for green laning, but having used them on a number of recent outings I would not be without the feeling of security that I get from this product. There are several different types of knee braces and supports depending not only on your depth of pocket but also the necessity of the top of the range over the item that does the job. Being in the "over 40" group at the Hafren I do not mend as easily as some but can ill afford time off work for something that is preventable with these products.

For a free brochure phone the factory direct on the freephone number 0800-731-50-53 or for those with internet access go online on [www.proline-sports.com](http://www.proline-sports.com) <<http://www.proline-sports.com>> for the very comprehensive catalogue of their products.

Product Tested: MUSTANG hinged knee brace

Price for Product: £80 - £91 (standard or breathable)

Product Rating: 10/10

Value for Money: 10/10

Tested by Tim Gooderson

## Report of Executive Meeting 09.03.02, Longford, Gloucester

A copy of the Minutes will be sent to all Principal and Co-opted Officers and to all Group Reps, any other member wishing to receive a copy please contact the Secretary.

**Incorporation** Although concern for personal liabilities was apparent, the Meeting decided to discuss the matter again at the December Exec, by which time we should know the threats imposed on the TRF by the CRoW Act.

**Group Funds and Returns** Should the TRF incorporate we would need to provide proper account of all funds held, which could prove difficult. Disappointment was expressed at the failure of some Groups to submit their returns since without this updated information it is impossible to progress.

**Officer Succession** The meeting looked at ways to encourage people to come forward to stand for the posts that will become vacant at this year's AGM. The meeting voted almost unanimously (one abstainer) to award an honorarium in the region of £500 to £1000 to Principal Officers, independent of expenditure on outsourcing or professional help to an agreed maximum. Members are asked to think hard about the issue of succession and these ideas and to feed thoughts back to us, either via your Group Rep or by contact with the Chair or Secretary. This issue will be an agenda item for the June Exec where it is hoped agreement on the way forward will be reached.

### Officers' Reports

**Treasurer** John Gardner reported that the good rate of renewals was giving us a very healthy bank balance both in the general fund and the Fighting Fund. He reminded the meeting of a £6000 commitment to the BBTC (formally TUA) for 2002.

**Membership** John Pritchard reported that renewals had come in well and stood at considerably more than 2000. He has sent out three renewals to each member not renewing and had circulated a list of renewals to Group Reps to chase up. In Cheshire, where the Group had folded, renewals were down which is both a shame and also indicative of the importance of the Group structure.

**RoW Coordinator (acting)** Dave Tilbury reported a wave of authorities doing whole rafts of TROs, along with blanket bans in National Parks and the threat to the Monks Trod. It appeared to be a ploy to drain users' enthusiasm at the beginning of the CRoW process. He urged all members to remind their Highway Authorities of their responsibilities. He had written two articles for TBM, neither of which had been published though Motorcycle Rider has published another.

**Exhibitions** Steve Sharp had contacted the NEC to find the cost of a stand at the

Motorcycle Show. The meeting thought that it would be worth the TRF being represented but that a lot of committed volunteers would be needed to run it for the ten days. There will be a notice elsewhere in this magazine and the subject will be an agenda item for June.

**Disclaimer for Maps** The Chairman noted that there were many out of date marked maps in existence and that the TRF should distance itself from them. The CRoW Act has altered how we may mark maps for others and it was recommended that we publish a disclaimer on all maps and that Groups look at existing maps, highlighting any route they use that is not a BOAT or a UCR and claiming them as Byways – they should not ride them until they do. Tim Stevens and Dave Tilbury would like to coordinate information on how Groups have collated this information and will be preparing a questionnaire for Groups.

**Lost Ways Project – Co Ag Funding** The Lost Ways Project is a two stage project and the first stage has identified not only significantly more lanes that are wrongly recorded but also significantly fewer volunteers than was first thought. The report on the first stage is awaited with interest.

**BBTC (TUA)** Dave Tilbury reported that the TUA had now ceased to exist and was now the Byways and Bridleways Trust Advisory Council. The meeting recognised and thanked Dave Giles for doing a good job in bringing together such a wide variety of interest or use groups. They have attended meetings with DEFRA to express their concerns. The TRF and LARA have additionally met with DEFRA expressing concerns.

**Scotways** The TRF is now affiliated to Scotways and a Scottish member is the designated individual contact for the organisation. It is hoped we may hear more on the situation in Scotland at the next meeting.

**Display Equipment** The meeting endorsed the spending of up to £1200 on some new display material. A sub committee was established to carry this forward.

**Merchandising** Groups were asked to look to their members to find someone with the necessary skills, enthusiasm and time to re start this initiative. There is undoubtedly some demand for it and the meeting was supportive.

**Database** In response to questions about the way lanes are recorded nationally the webmaster reported that he had a small database that members could have, but it was not necessarily used nationally. The meeting recognised the need to co ordinate this sort of information in the light of the claims needed to satisfy the CRoW Act.

**LARA Workshops** Tim Stevens reported workshops were planned for Northants on 23rd March and Dorset on 6th April with further events this year.

**Public Inquiries** DEFRA had recently sent out consultation papers for proper rules for inquiries and it was hoped that the TRF would assist with the consultation.

**Hierarchy of Trail Routes** Tim Stevens reported that the HoTR systems may be negated by the Association of National Parks Authority who now wants all routes status sorted now. The Cumbria Group will be asked the way to proceed and whether it was still appropriate to attend HoTR meetings.

**Suffolk Stopping Up** Charlie Morriss reported on a recent case where he had helped with a stopping up order. He had done considerable work on the case but felt that it failed because of lack of local TRF support. As the application was riddled with mistakes and omissions CM thought it would be a good case to take to appeal, though this could cost the TRF several thousands of pounds. The meeting felt that in the absence of the Suffolk Group and the lack of support at the initial hearing there was little point in pursuing the appeal.

**Further Meetings:** 22 June National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham: 14 Sept Newcastle under Lyme: 27 Oct AGM Venue TBA: 30 Nov Northampton.

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Member

When I last wrote to you I had taken part in the Holsworthy Trial. This time it's the MCC Lands End trial, which took place over the Easter weekend. The sections were good, particularly Blue Hills Mines both of which I cleaned having failed in the previous two years. But I had gremlins munching away at my tyres. I ended up with three punctures (two in the front and one in the rear). Most unusual.

During March we held an Executive, the minutes of which your group rep should have received and there should be a copy published in this month's TRAIL. Two points I would like to touch on. The first is about succession of the elected officers.

Prior to my taking up the reins the possibility of offering an honorarium had already been muted, so I take no credit for it. But the reality is that if we wish to attract new recruits we are going to have to offer some financial compensation. This was agreed so I am now putting flesh on these bones and will bring back to the June Executive a definitive proposal. As a separate but related issue please let me know if the idea of an executive role is one which you feel inclined to consider. You will recall that it was 15 months ago that the TRF found itself in an awkward position. I raise this because all the talk and effort, which is going into addressing the issues thrown up by the CroW Act, may be of little relevance if we cannot find people to do the day-to-day work.

That leads me neatly to the fact that the present team really does work well and much progress has been made behind the scenes on various fronts for which I am most grateful. However last year was particularly marked by the creation of the Byways and Bridleway Trust Council (BBTC) which started life as the Trail Users Alliance. This initiative was pioneered by the TRF utilising the considerable efforts and talents of Dave Giles. The BBTC represents a large number of users and has a more significant role because of its close association with the BBT. The considerable contribution to this success was due to David Giles and I have been asked by the National Executive to acknowledge this formally on behalf of the TRF. I wish therefore to record our appreciation for his efforts, which are much appreciated.

You will have read in the last copy of Trail the need to become more Rights of Way focused. As Groups (this is not a solo exercise) you have to organise the identification; research; and claiming (where relevant) of those lanes which you use. So get on with it – There is no time to lose.

In my note of last month I made mention of the 7 HBOS shares I hold on behalf of the TRF is there anyone out there who wishes to add to their holding in a cost effective way.

Finally, how did I do on the MCC trial? First thanks to Peter Gedye, who did the trial with me, for his help whilst dealing with the punctures (he had his own electrical problems). As I write the results are not published so you will have to wait.

Safe Riding.

André Confavreux

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# Report from *Dave Tilbury*

Dear fellow trail riders

We stand on the divide where one direction takes us to a place of new riding opportunities and where the other direction leads to the end of legal trail riding - and the membership is silent.


Apparently only seven members are interested in training. And, from the response to the research/claims questionnaire the executive must assume that there are few byways to claim and that all members are adequately equipped with RoW legal and practical skills. It is most rewarding to know that the TRF are in such a fine state of readiness for the future of trail riding.

Of course my assumptions are based solely on statistics and these do not always tell the full story. Looking at it another way it would appear that Cornwall are behind on their byway claims. I know this because they were the only group to respond to the questionnaire that was sent to all group reps.

So, what have I done during March? Not that stretched really, but I did deal with seven members who would like some training and I did log the questionnaire response from Cornwall. Would you buy a new bike and then not ride it? Well, for another four weeks you are paying for me so don't waste it.

In the meantime members might give thought to ceasing use on all lanes with the definitive status of RuPP, bridleway and footpath, even where there is coincidental recording on the List of Streets (unless a BOAT claim has been lodged).

*Dave Tilbury*



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## RoW NEWS

### Government Office for the South East

#### TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

The Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions hereby gives notice that on the application to Maidstone Borough Council, he proposes to make an Order under section 249 of the above Act to provide for the extinguishment of any right which persons may have to use vehicles on Boxley Warren, Pilgrim Way, Boxley in the county of Kent. The proposed Order will contain provisions for permitting the use of that highway by vehicles being used:

- (a) for police, ambulance or fire brigade purposes;
- (b) in connection with the laying, erection, inspection, maintenance, alteration, repair, renewal, or removal, in or near the said length of highway of any sewer, main, pipe, conduit, wire, cable or other apparatus for the supply of gas, water, electricity or of any telecommunication apparatus as defined in Schedule 2 to the Telecommunications Act 1984;
- (c) for pedal cyclists;
- (d) for land owners, vehicles together with plant and machinery used in conjunction with agricultural use and estate management of adjacent land;
- (e) for horse-drawn vehicles.

During 28 days from 5 April 2002, copies of the draft Order and relevant plan may be inspected at the offices of Maidstone Borough Council, Directorate of Development Services, 13 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8HG, and may be obtained, free of charge, from the Secretary of State (quoting Ref GOSE/029/001/KENT/009) at the address stated below. During the above-mentioned period of 28 days, anyone may object to the making of the Order by writing to the Secretary of State, quoting Ref GOSE/029/001/KENT/009, and addressing their objection to The Head of Transport (East), Government Office for the South East, First Floor, Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4GA. In preparation of an objection it should be borne in mind that the substance of any objection may be communicated to the applicant and other people who may be affected by it.

H Ure, a Higher Executive Officer in the Government Office for the South East. **SCHEDULE** Vehicular access to Boxley Warren, which lies in the North Downs AONB, is resulting in the progressive erosion of the chalk scarp and its flora, together with illegal dumping. The Council is seeking to extinguish the vehicular rights and erect a barrier in order to deny vehicular access to this area and prevent the problem outlined above.

*Richard Colquhoun, Kent TRF Group*

## ... and now the simple version: as seen s.34a explanation

I have had several requests for an explanation of how s.34a of the Road Traffic Act will impact on trail riding so that the point can be better made when writing to MPs.

So, from the beginning ...

From the time when the Romans ruled the British Isles we have had three classifications of public right of way which equate to footpath bridleway and carriageway. BOAT is the acronym for Byway Open to All Traffic or, in simple terms, a carriageway without tarmac. BOATs are no longer made. They are rather like half timbered houses in that they have considerable history and are only still here with us by good fortune. They are part of our heritage and should be treated as such.

The rights to use a carriage (which equates in our case to a trail bike) on a carriageway came about either by long use (time out of mind) or were set out when the common land was shared amongst the titled and wealthy by Acts of Inclosure. Our forefathers were required to toil on the roads for a set number of days per year with this labour being commuted to a tax today. As trail riders, with road legal bikes, road fund, insurance and the appropriate driving licence we have a right to ride on carriageways and that right has been ratified by Parliament, if not in the granting of the right then most certainly in the various Highway Acts that have been passed since 1555. Specifically in the 1903 Motor Car Act, and this was confirmed in 1910 when the tax we still call the 'Road fund' was created for motor vehicles only

It is an offence to use a motor vehicle on a footpath, bridleway or land not forming part of a road and has been since 1930. The offence is currently set out in s.34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act creates a new section for the RTA88 (s.34a) which could make it impossible for someone charged under s.34 RTA88 to adduce evidence of carriageway rights if the route in question is wrongly recorded on the definitive map as footpath, bridleway or restricted byway.

Highway authorities have been under a statutory duty (in other words they had no option but to do what the duty required) since 1949 to create an accurate definitive map. This has not happened in any county in England or Wales but this failure to accurately record the status of unmetalled carriageways as BOAT exposes the trail rider to a charge under s.34 RTA88 but a defence to such a charge is then denied by s.34a.

We could have no defence to a prosecution brought for a non-crime if we are not relieved from the effects of s.34a.

*Ed.* Section 34A of the CRoW Act is not as yet law. It is in breach of your common law rights and probably your human rights but may happen anyway. **We have to fight it and that means all of us.**

*Dave Tilbury*

# A LITTLE CRACKER

## PRESS RELEASE FROM OUR 4-WHEEL DRIVE COUNTERPARTS GLASS

### ONE STEP TOO FAR

It seems that walking groups, including the Ramblers Association, are getting ever more greedy. Of the many miles of Public Rights of Way that exist in England and Wales, well over 90% are for the exclusive use of walkers. Cyclists, horse riders and motor vehicles are totally excluded, according to the government's Countryside Agency.

Yet, despite winning access to thousands of square miles of open land with the 'Right to Roam', councils up and down the country are under increasing pressure to ban other user groups so that walkers can have sole access to the countryside. In a bizarre and ridiculous move ramblers have even decided that memorial benches impede their enjoyment of the open air. They have petitioned Pembrokeshire Coast National Park to such an extent that the Park Authority have been forced to take it to a vote. The walkers are calling for a ban on all memorial benches along the 186 mile coastal walk on the basis that they are "too morbid".

On average there is only one such bench every three miles and each only carries a very small plaque. A representative of the Park Authority said "I think these benches are nice. I am certainly not in favour of the ban". He went on to explain that people put the benches along the coastal path in memory of happier times. Their departed loved ones liked to enjoy the Park in much the same way as the walkers of today do. The very same walkers that are now calling for this ban.

The Green Lane Association (GLASS), a national Rights of Way organisation representing motorists, is totally bemused and astonished that ramblers be asking for such a ban. In a show of support for Authorities like the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park that are facing this kind of pressure and for the relatives of those who wish to be remembered in the places they knew, GLASS is making an open offer to all Local Authorities to provide the transport and manpower to install such memorial benches.

A spokesman for GLASS said "We have got used to walkers wanting to ban motorists from the very small part of the Rights of Way network we are legally able to use, but to try and ban memorials has taken even us by surprise. We have seen time and time again how ramblers can be selfish to the point of absurdity but this really does go too far. The countryside is there for all to enjoy and why shouldn't people who have passed on be remembered in the places they enjoyed during their lifetime?"

*Sent in by Dave Tilbury*

## RUN REPORT - EXMOOR RUN

The date was set at the September club night, and with the interest being so great, both Paul Creed and Steve Cousins agreed that they would each lead a run starting in different locations. Paul's run would start at Hawkridge Reservoir with the gay riders (according to Dave Holt) and Steve's ride started at Dunster lay-by.

After the formalities, which Steve explains to us, we then started on our journey to see the glorious sights of Exmoor.

The weather was brilliant sunshine all day, it also stayed dry for most of us (Colin). The scenery around the area was outstanding.

The first lane we attempted to ride was a great tester and every body seemed to enjoy it. This may have given some the false sense of security for the rest of the ride. Things seemed to be going fine, that is, until the first ford crossing. Colin's dependable Serrow came to a disintegrating halt. As normal you can always depend on Dave Holt and me to diagnose the problem (to ask us to fix it, you must be kidding). Reliable Tony Steel come to the rescue. Anyway, with the bike fixed we persevered with our travels.

As the day continued the riding was getting easier, that was until we came across THE HILL and SLIMLY LANE. If you had the pleasure to ride the hill before, you could imagine the sight if you are the last person. Tony enjoyed the hill so much he rode it twice! Once on his CRM and the second time on a DRZ400. After a much-needed breather we carried on. We then arrived at the dreaded Slimly Lane. After Steve lost it on a corner the next four riders decided to continue, however what happened next made Steve laugh so much he had to sit down. The four riders were four abreast going nowhere fast, it looked like something out of the Wacky Races. It took a long time to man handle the bikes to the top. Dave Holt entertained the group with his impressions of John Curry, skating around on the rocks. At one stage, he attempted to do a backward somersault only to land on his backside breaking his mobile phone.

After Slimly Lane lunch was taken. During lunch Steve made contact with Paul, so it was only a matter of time before we met up. We progressed on with our travels and made our way to TARR STEPS. Dave Holt swears blind that he saw Tim and Paul Andrews entertaining themselves in the woods, comparing their garments (pink skirts). Considering it was November, the river was shallow and everybody crossed without any fuss.

After a little chat and compare notes on the days ride so far, both groups continued with the days ride. The rest of the day seemed uneventful until we descended a steep hill followed by a river crossing. The first seven bikes crossed safely, until Colin decided to do an impression of a nuclear submarine doing an emergency crash dive. Both he and his bike vanished for a brief moment, only for him to resurface like a dolphin. After drying out we then continued.

After completing Black Monkey Lane, John's bike (DR250) refused to start so it was agreed that Colin and Neil would continue with the ride and return with the van to pick John up.

*Tony Armstrong, Bristol Group*

## My 50th Birthday Dream Holiday

July 2001

For my 50th Birthday my Wife allowed (brownie points added up from 18 years marriage and three kids) me to go away on a biking holiday with my friends Nick and Tim. So the planning starts. We all road ride and me and Nick off road (to a fashion) and Tim didn't, where do we go? Suggestions included tour of Britain, Spain, France????

Then someone suggested a drive through England to the docks at Portsmouth and ferry to Bilbao (Spain) through the Pyrenees to Andorra a couple of days off road and then head back. Yes Pleeeeeaaazze!!!!

Nick e-mailed Chris Scott Moto Adventures and many others but after deliberation including Tim to try off roading, firstly over here and again in The Pyrenees! We went to the G-Mex Manchester show and visited MOTO Adventures who had videos that convinced him to have a go, (though I'm not convinced its as easy as they made it seem). So we decided to set up the trip such as book the ferry, co-ordinate times of arrival, stay overs and the trip back, all is going well and that's it we're going!

Problem number one Foot and Mouth, how can Tim get proficient at off-road if we can't get off road? Time is against us waiting for F&M to end, leaving me just 2-3 weeks to show him the ropes. He does quite well and we boost his confidence (like he needed it), even though we only do quite easy lanes (F&M still going strong).

The trip is organised for an 11-day round trip, not an eternity but being my first excursion of this size in 20 years, it feels long enough. Two days before start date and we still haven't got together to finalise who's taking what, etc. although Nick has done an itinerary which would have been great had we got together and sorted it out, only each time we meet it's in the pub. We finally got together and decided my tents (2 x 3 man) will suffice and who's to take what?

Day of setting off arrives and can I get a bike shape out of my luggage on wheels, no chance. One of the other riders



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we go out with came to see us off and he suggested dumping the tank bag then at least we can see the seat, even though the saddle bags and sleeping bag and seat pack take up all other space. My wife Ingrid then attacks these and re-packs each bag, giving me somewhere to sit at least and slowly the bike shape is coming back. Nick has a Thundercat with a top box and tank bag which looks very tidy until Tim turns up on his Fireblade, his soft luggage all very neatly packed and well distributed making him look a very proficient tourer in comparison to my over stuffed packing and unbalanced rolling dumper truck (Firestorm).

Setting off around 10.30am we had plenty of time to catch the ferry as it wasn't setting off until 7pm. A lovely sunny day we had to experience the awesome A49 which although not direct, is a brilliant road to go down south on, and we prefer A roads instead of motorways. Great rides despite comments from my mates about things sticking out and about to fall off and how it looks like no-ones on the bike from the back, etc. Anyway we arrive in Portsmouth after an exhilarating ride at around 5pm and decide to have a beer.

We had met 3 blokes on the dock awaiting to board who told us they were from MCN heading through to the African Sahara and back (did see the write-up a month later) testing a BMW Trailie Aprilia Capronoid and a Triumph Tiger which seemed a waste of time for both bike and rider. Who in their right mind would do that journey in such a short amount of time, unless they were testing reliability, which in each case I could have told them, that apart from CCMs, bikes hardly ever break down (unless they are out of warranty) and they were riding new bikes.

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Arriving in Bilbao 36 hours later, we are foot and mouthed squirted, then set off on what is my best road riding experience ever!!! Each day brings even more outstanding roads which never get boring because of the scenery or the bends. This cannot be beaten for anyone who enjoys road riding. Suffice to say this carried on for 3 days (not a direct route) until we arrive in Andorra and our introduction to the companions we were to share the next two days off roading in the Pyrenees. They had booked 5 days and we were joining them for their last two days. This proved two things.

1. We had provided Tim with enough confidence in his off roading that he asked to go in the faster group as opposed to the 'girlie group' (big mistake).

2. The group had got to know each other very well. We were told not to ask John any questions about bikes as he could tell you model numbers, weights, dimension, etc. and did he like to? We couldn't help but take the mickey and later asked him the weight of the ferry he had come over on (same as us 3 days earlier) and he knew!! And also where it was last serviced - TRUTH!!

First day off roading and the bikes we ride are XR400 which compared to my DRZ400S is more off road oriented and copes with all this terrain quite easily. Which is more than can be said for some of the group. Some people have turned up with very little off road experience, others have competed, so it was only natural to split into 2 groups, fast and slow. This is where Tim had opted for the fast and I wanted to go in the slow, but wasn't allowed. The course was full of fire tracks climbing up through the mountains, climbs and downhill river crossing, ruts, the only thing missing was mud. Otherwise an excellent days off roading. Some of the river crossing was up stream for about half a mile and just prior to this I had been coming downhill in very deep ruts and I was actually in the middle of jumping (yes, jumping) from one rut into another, when I found someone right in front of me lying across the route I'm travelling in. I stop and have to run slightly uphill, which isn't a problem as the bike is still running, until I try to pull it out the rut and it stalls. Its John (know all) who's in the way but gets up and away, not before seeing I was having trouble starting again. This now becomes quite a problem as it doesn't start for ten minutes. I reach the river and for the first time they have mis-counted and left me, leaving me to guess which way to go. Obviously I chose wrong (old tyre tracks convinced me). Now after half a mile I realise the tracks are too old and head back not realising that no tracks exist because they have gone up stream.

Luckily I follow the river (cause I can't get out) and now follows the best and worst part of my lonely journey. I'm lost which is a funny feeling in a foreign country where I can't speak the lingo and with no-one around for miles. I manage to get out the river to find a track that has ruts, but also along them are areas of about 6-8 feet craters filled with water. Not having seen anything like it before I approach with caution and as with anything off road don't 'namby-pamby' - go for it. This takes me from horizontal to around 55 degrees down 4-5 feet totally emerged in water and out at 55 degrees all within the space of 3 bikes length. After the initial


shock of the see-saw motion with the front wheel up in the air coming out the other side, I start to enjoy these like a kid and can now even remember tears of laughter rolling down my face as my friend Nick appears (I'd forgotten I was with someone) and all I can say is 'try these they are awesome' to which he replies **everyone** is searching for you. This is the one time I wanted John (know all) to speak and he didn't. Had he told of me not being able to kick the bike up none of this would have happened. I should have just run him over on the hill!

This is followed by a 2 hour white water rafting experience which at first felt like an intrusion on our riding, but in fact turned out to be just as much adrenaline featured fun. Am I in heaven or what? Another night's socialising was followed by a rainy day (what's this?) cloud around the top of the mountains, middle of summer, snow.

Now instead of two groups of 5-6 we had one group of 7 as the southern softies slowly wimped out. Tim's wrist was sore and I must admit I was feeling stiff after continually twisting the throttle back to the stop, just to keep in touch the day before. As I suggested, Tim's confidence was a big mistake as on our return with wrist still sore he was told he'd fractured his wrist. On to day two we were down to 7 from 12, halfway up the mountain 3-4 inches of snow and getting colder in our summer outfits. Most are wanting to return but Nick and I were determined to have our second day and insist the leader takes us on. The others follow. Approaching the

peak the snow is quite thick and everyone is in dread as the downhill we are going to tackle is the climb we finished the day before which had people struggling with the deep ruts. Off we go and within 200 yards Nick and myself have overtaken the leader and are in our type of terrain. Each plateau we stop at we take photos and wait for the rest of the group. After around an hour of this downhill the snow disappears and we are back to the dry sun-baked terrain, or should I say throttle back to the stop terrain, for this is how we spend at least half the day. No complaints apart from you see little of the really beautiful scenery.

We meet up with the rest of the bunch for lunch. Tim (still with sore wrist) and southern softies, including our run leader Chris Scott, from the day before, and may I add these lunches are brilliant not just



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for the social banter but the food is superb. This is in beautiful sunny conditions and its the first that morning that they have seen the sun, whereas after the snow broke we have nothing but sun for the rest of the day, until returning to Andorra where its still raining. I say returning to Andorra because we are forever crossing the border with Spain and this can be a slight nod of the head to see you through or a stop and search. I suppose it depends on how frisky the guards are feeling.

Another night of socialising with a great bunch of people leaves me wanting more of both days in the mountains and nights of new found like-minded people. Day 3 is recovery day, with presents to buy for the wife, kids and myself (tax-free). After much retail therapy we are going home next day, although we still have 3 days of wonderful riding so there's no pit of the stomach ache like when normally coming home from holiday.

The riding back through the mountain passes can only be described as exhilarating in the way my new 'tax-free' boots are bedded in (the left toe slider melted after two hours of scraping tarmac). You may do between 250-300 miles a day but this is never on the middle of the tyre, and that some travelling. Even the ride back up the A49 is sun drenched and we all arrive back with massive grins that didn't leave us for weeks. I would like to thank Nick and Tim for their company on such a wonderful holiday and my wife for understanding (even though I thought they weren't meant to understand).

Thanks.

Steve Robertson

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# LETTERS



## CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

I would like to say how very much I approve of the article "Constructive Criticism" by C. J. Marsh. I think it's excellent and something that the TRF membership should take on board.

*Gordon Dalgarno*

## JUST HOW MUCH DO WE CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMY?

Referring to C.J. Marsh's letter in the March TRAIL - I suggest that the Treasurer and P.R. Officer could devise a couple of basic forms for each member to record their economic activity.

One form could be used for direct economic activity connected with each trail ride, such as petrol, etc to travel to/from the riding area: other expenses, petrol, lunch and so on during the day, any accommodation and other food, maps etc. The other form could record supporting economic activity such as original and maintenance costs of motorcycle, clothing, equipment, trailers and accessories, proportion of computers and peripherals, internet subscriptions, telephone, office sundries, travel for research, materials for research, travel to TRF meetings, etc. Perhaps motorcycle mileage and proportion if used to commute to work.

Each item would also have space to state if the money was spent in remote country, village, town or city. For example, many of our mail order suppliers are based in rural communities and are significant local employers.

If a significant sample of members can help with this survey over a period, then surely we can gather the data we seek.

*Mark Holland, Gloucester Group.*

## DAMAGE?

C.J. Marsh writes (middle of page 22) in the TRAIL in March that "The main opposition to vehicles using rights of way is that they damage the surface. Agreed. We cannot argue against it, the evidence is too great."

I can argue against it. The DETR's (now DEFRA) 'Making the Best of Byways' argues against it. The CLA/LARA Rapid Response Scheme for problems on green lanes argues against it. For at least the last ten years Gloucestershire County Council, when asked, argue against it (the main damage is caused by agricultural vehicles on all types of ROW and by bicycles on footpaths). Herefordshire County Council minutes argues against it (main damage is agricultural and motorcycles damage is insignificant).

Foot traffic does not cause damage. The Ramblers Association call it instead 'erosion' and describe it in a section on their website.

The 'real world' independent outdoor magazines, such as The Great Outdoors regularly describe footpath repair schemes. In the March issue TGO reports damage even in a remote path on Faery Hill in the Caledonians, where £1870.00 has been spent. They report: "The path has become one of the ugliest mountain scars in Scotland". In the same issue the Lake District National Park Authority is urging walkers to walk with "brains in their boots", and offers guidelines such as "keep on the path". 130 paths in the Lake District National Park need urgent attention. They have funding from the National Lottery of £1,460,000.

If we look at a geology map of Britain it is apparent why certain areas need a little more effective maintenance on their RoW. This emphasis is apparent in the maintenance section in 'Making the Best of Byways'. However, few Authorities actually have a maintenance plan and even have restrictive practices to keep volunteers away.

Unfortunately the farmers, landowners and anti-RoW extremists' organisations have had 'stories' of damage in the right wing press and many have fallen for their propaganda.

When people accuse us of damaging their lanes, perhaps you should first ask what they mean by damage, and then ask the location. At this stage they tend to go quiet.

Once the 'damage argument' is demolished our opposers tend to be whittled back to other reasons, such as those aired and subsequently discussed by the Independent Inspector at the last public enquiry into a TRO on The Ridgeway, until in the end they just pout "well we just don't like you".

What is the cause of this dislike? One cause is "superior values" described in the report 'Green Lanes' by the Darlington Amenity Research Trust appointed to carry out this work for the (then) Countryside Commission. (Many of the problems affecting green lanes, such as ill-defined status leading to ploughing out, have still to this day not been addressed by Highway Authorities).

Another cause is the old 'steam versus sail' argument - "my method of

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movement was on the earth first, so keep out of my way!"

Another cause is the communist roots of the walkers' amenity movement and thus their deference to private motor mobility, and preference for public collective ownership of any motor transport.

Another cause is the widespread misunderstanding of minorities or others responsibly exercised rights. The RA's website does not acknowledge the rights of other users. Anyway, only a minuscule proportion of walkers are members of the RA. Presently the Countryside Agency website gives RoW 'definitions' dumbed-down for the majority of foot users. Websites such as naturenet give non-sensical 'definitions', leading to even more confusion.

Another cause of dislike of RoW users is financial reasons. Farmers, landowners and adjoining house residents can add considerable value to their property by obtaining downgrades or closures of RoW. Solicitors who specialise in RoW are in reality the people who work hard to create fear and thus make themselves money. Walkers organisations also have financial reasons to be seen to be defending, albeit selfishly, the interests of their paid-up membership. *Mark Holland, Gloucester*

## COMMENTS

First I set about summarising the state of play regarding the new countryside and rights of way act (no abbreviation) as I see it. This is necessary to bring him up to speed because in my experience your average M.P. will have an opinion on all the major issues of the day, Afghanistan & the Euro etc. But ask him about leg protectors, helmet laws, bus lanes, db levels, rights of way or anything else concerning us, forget it.

Then I started to pick the bones out of the article to see what I needed to include in my letter. Before I had finished my rough draft it dawned on me that this was quite "difficult going". How many other members would be taking the trouble? Out of the people I know it would be 10% at best. 10% of 3000 is not terribly persuasive.

This article was written with the best will in the world by someone far more clever than me to prompt a letter writing campaign. In an ideal situation everyone who reads trail would have a full understanding of the wildlife and countryside act and the countryside and rights of way bill, unfortunately the situation isn't ideal. Most people, if we're honest, are in our Fellowship to ride motorcycles. many will have switched off before they were halfway through the article. Maybe they lacked the background knowledge to understand it, maybe they hadn't the confidence to write to their M.P., maybe they didn't know where to write to their M.P. or even who their M.P. is, or maybe they felt they didn't have the skills to compose/articulate/simplify/expand etc. None of these reasons means they are any less passionate about their hobby or any less keen to sway their M.P.'s views.

It could be argued that a "standard" letter or a letter from a fanatic or seasoned (and known) canvasser doesn't carry as much weight as correspondence

in J. Bloggs own hand. But I feel that as long as an M.P. isn't inundated with almost identical letters then a "standardish" letter could serve our purpose.

Make the task easier, dumb it down and you will get a bigger "take up" I guarantee it. And those that do "take up" will feel more useful and become better "fellows".

For those who haven't written to an M.P. before the best bit is when your reply embossed with the house of Commons Port Cullis lands on your doormat and you can tell your Mrs/Kids it's another letter from your pen pal the right honourable member for.....

P.S. Don't forget to ask questions and for opinions in your letters. The more time he spends, and the more he has to apply his mind to his reply the more you are influencing him.

*Night Rider Newton - Sunderland*

## CLASSIFIED

**BRENDAN CHASE B & B** Lake Windermere from £15.00 each x 4 sharing. Bike lock-up, parking, all rooms c/h, CTV, H & C, pub and grub handy, CCTV surveillance. Tel: 01539 445638.

**HONDA CRM250AR** (latest model) motorcycle. Terrific acceleration for a 250 - and great suspension - a real joy to ride on or off road. Been used on the road and a little gentle trail riding only. (I have Serow as well). No cosmetic damage - excellent throughout. Also excellent mechanically and with very good tyres. Just been serviced. A real bargain at only £2650 for quick sale. **ALSO KAWASAKI Z550** motorcycle. Old but in very good order - both cosmetically and mechanically - and low mileage. Complete with touring panniers. Real bargain at only £1250. An operation forces sale of both of these motorcycles. Tel: 01782 613236.

**1994 YAMAHA WR250** T&T, excellent condition, werx graphics, over size tank, wiseco piston, powder coated frame, very reliable. £1000. Tel: 01282 724225.

**HONDA XL350** 1988. Good condition, road use only, long MOT, taxed. £800. Tel: 01672 851609 (Wiltshire).

**HONDA TL125S** 1979 "T" reg 10,000 miles. 99% original condition. New Pirelli tyres, Sammy Miller exhaust. Garaged for last 10

years and in need of restoration. Open to offers. Tel: 02476 675064 (West Mids.).

**XLR200 "S"** reg. 5,950 miles, T&T. Lower than XR, bigger than a Serow. Two mature TRF owners, new chain and sprockets and bearings. £1500. Tel: 01704 545134 (Lancs.).

**XT225 SEROW** 1996. Excellent trail bike. Low seat, e/start. Good condition, regularly serviced. Renthals, barkbusters, datatag, tax/mot, new chain/sprockets/battery/brake pads/shoes, spare cables etc. 10,500 miles. £1100. Tel: 01276 475835 (Bagshot, Surrey).

**SINGLE BIKE TRAILER** £80. Tel: 01524 64373 or 07850 741439.

**HONDA XLR200** 1988 imported new. "S" reg. T&T Oct '02. Only 3500 miles. Many on road during F&M. Elec. start. £1950. Tel: John Mills 01477 534425 (M6 J18).

**HONDA CRM250AR "S"** reg, alloy sump guard, alloy frame guards, Renthals, Hand guards, £2550. **Yamaha WR200** Workshop Manual £15. Tel: 01200 428844 or 07773 854581.

**FOR SALE** 1 x Frank Thomas Waterproof jacket with armour, medium £50. 1 x pair SIDI off-road boots size 9.5, £40. 1 x Full-face helmet with Oakley Goggles, large, £15. Tel: Paul 07967 388875.

**HONDA CRM250 MkII.** 1993. Good condition. £1350. Tel: 01254 721897 (Blackburn, Lancashire).