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TRAIL

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

DECEMBER 2002 No. 292



Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow...

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

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EDITOR

2002 has been a time of change for TRAIL. We have taken the big steps of going to colour for the cover and printing more pages on occasions which has been made possible because of more contributions from the members (which you would expect from a growing organisation). I would like to thank all of you who have made contributions. It is, unfortunately, not always possible to print a contribution in the first couple of months after it is submitted due to 'official stuff' such as minutes of meetings, officers reports and the like and by the time there is room the contribution becomes out of date or irrelevant, so, if your contribution has not been used it does not mean that it was not appreciated. Not only that, the more items to choose from, the more interesting TRAIL is likely to be.

So here's to a Very Merry Christmas and a Good Trail Riding New Year.

TRF CALENDAR COMPETITION 2003

1st, 2nd & 3rd prizes Fuji 35mm zoom cameras

The best entries ever. No, not bull. The high standard of photographs this year made choosing the winners very, very difficult. *This might have something to do with the superb 35mm zoom cameras offered as prizes by FujiFilm.* So, if you aren't a winner this year have another go next year.

In the end a decision had to be made and this year's winner is Aleck Coulson from Redditch with his picture 'The Happy Rider' on a packhorse bridge in Derbyshire. Aleck's photo will appear on January's TRAIL cover as well as on your 2003 TRF calendars. The second prize goes to Dave Loney from Leeds - you will already have seen his snow scene picture on this month's TRAIL cover. Third prize goes to George Bryant from West Sussex - twin shock mountain climbing on the Stella Alpina 1999. George's photo will appear on February's TRAIL cover.

Congratulations to you all.

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

Fred Ellison

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COVER PHOTO by Dave Loney
In the snow - Kirkby Underdale,
Yorkshire Wolds.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

When you read this copy of TRAIL it will probably be with a glass of wine in one hand, raised in celebration of another Christmas – Bah! Humbug!

You have already had an end of term report from me so I won't rehearse those points again. However, there has been an important meeting on 19 November. This was the one at Didcot about the Ridgeway. It was well attended particularly by members of the TRF, some travelling long distances, for which I thank you. My own impression was that a clear message was conveyed. The answer to the problem of the Ridgeway and the deterioration of the surface is to spend more time and money on maintenance for the benefit of all. The imposition of TROs is unlikely to have any positive effect on this problem. Also those who currently abuse the Ridgeway are unlikely to respond positively to any regulation order either voluntary or compulsory. The council was asked to think again in a more positive way than simply restricting use as this was unlikely to produce the desired result. In the present sensitive climate the Ridgeway is being seen as something of a test case so considerable attention needs to be paid to its outcome.

On Saturday (30 November) we held the last Executive for this year and the last before the new Chairman (John Pritchard) takes over. Of great significance was the afternoon when we discussed the way forward – Strategy for the TRF – particularly in the immediate future. All present made the exercise well worthwhile by their individual contributions, which was much appreciated. The focus included addressing the two statutory instruments (Restricted Byways and S34A). The latest advice is that these should be published in their consultative form before or just after Christmas and March of next year, respectively.

I see the formation of a Strategy team being of paramount importance in challenging, not only the statutory instruments, but also those organisations which have no positive objective other than serving their own interests at the cost of others and in so doing prejudicing the human rights of many.

Although I shall now be watching the game from the sidelines, I can assure you that I shall continue to take a keen interest in progress. When I took up the position some two years ago I had only a fraction of the knowledge which John possesses, so he will 'hit the ground running', a factor which will serve him and the TRF well going forward. The elected officers are keen, hardworking and most able, so I have no concern over the transition. What is now needed is for you – yes, the members - to offer help when asked.

Thanks to all of you for your help and support during the last two years.
Best Wishes for Christmas and especially for the New Year.

André Confavreux, National Chairman

NOTICE BOARD

PLEASE HELP - WHERE CAN I HIRE BIKES?

I have some friends (6) coming over from the USA in the summer. They want to spend 3/4 days trail riding in Wales and then move on to tour Scotland on road bikes. Does anybody have info on where they can hire trail bikes in Wales and road bikes in Scotland? Please telephone 01495 222728 or e-mail mikerees65@hotmail.com

Mike Rees

PEAK DISTRICT GROUP

The Peak District Group's Rights of Way committee urgently needs to submit to Derbyshire C.C. as many claims for lanes as can be completed. To facilitate this the help of members is required. No special skills required - instruction will be given on the night. All you need is a ballpoint and enthusiasm!

Will members of the group (even if you haven't joined the TRF yet) please make every effort to attend the next meeting on January 2nd 2003, usual venue.

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RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT NEWS RELEASE

The following is a news release from the Countryside Agency about Rights of Way Improvement Plans sent by Nicola Redwood

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENTS COME A STEP CLOSER

Government announcements this week provide a welcome framework in which England's rights of way network should become more usable and be extended to meet the needs of everyone using it, according to the government's rural champion the Countryside Agency. But it warns that the success of this new framework depends on adequate funding and the commitment of local highway authorities.

The commencement of a new duty for local highway authorities to prepare Rights of Way Improvement Plans, announced on the 28th November by Rural Affairs Minister Alun Michael, gives local authorities the opportunity to plan and create a network of routes to suit **everyone's** needs, as well as to improve the existing network. In 2005 these Rights of Way Improvement Plans will become part of Local Transport Plans, following Tuesday's 26th November announcement from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, demonstrating the Government's commitment to quality rights of way.

Richard Wakeford, Countryside Agency chief executive, said: "These announcements are key to ensuring that our rights of way network continues to develop to meet the needs of **all users**. It is only by planning and managing paths locally that everyone's needs can be accounted for and routes can be developed to benefit all - from local families using them to walk their children to school or take more exercise, to tourists using them to enjoy our beautiful countryside.

"At the same time funding must be committed to put these good plans in to practice. Over the past 10 years the Countryside Agency has invested around £30 million in helping local authorities to improve the basic standards of rights of way. With the creation of improvement plans local authorities now have to assume responsibility for extending and improving themselves and they must identify dedicated funding to do this.

"The Countryside Agency is working with local authorities to prepare model Rights of Way Improvement Plans, which will help set a pattern, style and format for them to follow. We are also pleased that the Government

intends to keep the plans separate within Local Transport Plans, to ensure that traffic-free routes are given the attention they need. We will be monitoring the preparation and implementation of the plans to see how well they work on the ground and will continue to offer support and advice on how to provide the routes that everyone wants, at the standards we want to see.

1. There are 120,000 miles of rights of way across England which include footpaths, bridleways, byways and roads used as public paths (RuPPs).
2. The requirement for every local highway authority to prepare a Right of Way Improvement Plan was included in the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000.

The Countryside Agency's Rights of Way Condition Survey 2000 showed that a lot of improvements need to be made. None of the counties met the targets set for sign posting to make rights of way 'easy to find' and only 15% met both our 'easy to follow' and 'easy to use' criteria.

SERIOUS THREAT TO BULLOCK ROAD, HUNTINGDONSHIRE


Earlier this year Cambridgeshire County Council announced their intention to develop the three Byway sections of the old drove road known as Bullock Road in Huntingdonshire for what they call 'informal recreation and conservation'.

At the beginning of November they released their final report on the project outlining their proposals. Unfortunately, despite a number of very welcome ideas they also stated their intention to secure Winter TROs 'to protect both wildlife and access interests'.

In addition to these plans a similar closure is being threatened on an unrelated Byway a few miles away at Leighton Bromswold.

Given the existing level of restrictions in this area the closure of these lanes would in effect end Winter trail riding in the former county of Huntingdonshire for good.

Cambs TRF group cannot accept this and we would urge anyone with an



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interest in protecting our rights in this area to write to: Cambridgeshire County Council, Countryside Services Team, ET1009, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge, CB3 0AP.

For further info contact Richard Sugden, Cambs Group RoW Rep Tel: 07889 756701 (days) or 01354 651390 (evenings).

WILTSHIRE INTENDS TO BAN HORSES FROM GREEN ROADS

Wiltshire County Council, not so long ago the paradigm against which other authorities were measured, continues its slide towards the dark side. In August the council 'consulted' about placing traffic regulation orders on eight green roads, five of which are BOATs and three footpaths, where the council has been directed by the Secretary of State to make orders to 'upgrade' to BOAT. No details of the extent of the order for the 'footpaths' is given, but for two of the five BOATs the restriction is for 'vehicular traffic', while on the other three, it is for 'vehicular, equestrian and cycling traffic'. The justification cited is that s22A of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has introduced the criteria 'conserving the natural beauty of the area, its flora, fauna, geological and physiological features'.

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NATIONAL RoW CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

You have escaped my tedious technical text for several editions of TRAIL and so I thought it time to put finger to keyboard once again. I have to say that I have been kept extremely busy with RoW issues of late and there may be some members who think that they have not received the service they expect from a volunteer. Communication remains a problem and there is currently a delay of about a week for any non-urgent issues.

So, the urgent issues in recent times have been the Ridgeway, the Ridgeway and the Ridgeway. Allow me to update you on what has been happening.

Some little time ago a group known as Friends of the Ridgeway (FotR) withdrew from the Code of Respect for Ridgeway users. This code was drawn up following a public Inquiry that decided there was not a problem with motorised users on the Ridgeway and that traffic regulation Orders were not appropriate. This withdrawal by FotR was part of a large PR campaign, which involved local MPs and other elected members of local authorities, seeking a ban on all recreational vehicles from the Ridgeway.

One authority, Swindon, in a knee-jerk reaction slapped a TRO on one section (not quite as legitimately done as might be but that is another long and boring story). It was admitted that Swindon had done nothing in the way of remedial work for the last seven years. Others, including the Ridgeway Management Group, admit that it is more like twelve years since any major work was carried out.

Time and many meetings pass and in the evening of 19th November there was a meeting held in Didcot as part of the future management consultation process. This meeting took place in a fair sized venue and it was filled to capacity with dozens standing around the edges. Didcot Town Council tell me that the hall has a capacity for 350 and they are concerned that this was seriously exceeded. Local press put the number at 600. Originally a side room was booked for forty people!

The speakers at that meeting included representatives from the Ridgeway Management Group, Swindon Borough Council, equestrians, walkers, wheelchair users and, of course, FotR in the form of Ian Ritchie. Tim Stevens, wearing his LARA hat, spoke for the recreational motorist.

Mike Furness, for the Ridgeway Management Group, spoke very well and in so doing covered the issue factually and without bias. There are problems to be solved but they are not insurmountable. Mike welcomes responses to the Surface Improvement Proposals Consultation paper that is available via the web site - www.nationaltrail.gov.uk. From a personal point of view I welcome an experimental TRO on a limited section of the Ridgeway, providing it is properly monitored, because I believe that the trail rider will not be seen to be the culprit at the end of the day. Past studies have indicated this but have been denigrated by

FotR and GLEAM. Let us get this issue sorted once and for all and then it can be applied throughout the country via the principles of Best Value.

I will not enter the tedium of a verbatim account of the other speakers except to make a couple of brief comments.

Ian Ritchie (FotR) did not perform well, probably due to the fact that he clearly only had around 5% of the audience with him. This is an important point. At meetings with Swindon BC and Members of Parliament he has blustered that the people are on his side. Where were they? I heard the odd ill tempered heckle. One crusty old boy called for the Chair, Duncan McKay, to "cut he cackle and get on with it" but that was about the only support Ian received.

Tim Stevens ignored the negative 'don't like it; don't understand it; don't want it' approach taken by FotR and concentrated on the positive – on opportunities not problems. It was a call to abandon campaigns based on ignorance and dishonesty and to concentrate on getting the problems sorted out.

The meeting entered a period of comment and questions from the floor. One speaker, a Doctor and Friends of the Earth supporter asked Ian Ritchie why they had used photographs of damage done by agricultural vehicles in the FotR press release to discredit recreational users, further exposing the dishonesty of the FotR. Many TRF members spoke and were a credit to the Fellowship in the way their points were put. Many 4x4 and other motorcycle club members also spoke and they were equally eloquent in making their point.

I recall no one supporting the FotR point of view. From this point onward any sentient person must consider the FotR to be no more than a handful of intolerant individuals that have been extremely successful with their public relations campaign.

So, if we ignore, for the moment, the input from Ian Ritchie there was no distention from the rest of the meeting that the Ridgeway is not in a particularly good condition in certain parts. Some sections in need of remedial words are vehicular and some are not. The very strong feeling I took from the meeting was that the Ridgeway should be given a sympathetic surface that can withstand the level of use it receives. From memory it was only Ian Ritchie that thought banning one user group would solve the problem. Others felt that the authorities should address the high level of illegal

use but not introduce measures that would impact on decent members of society. The Ridgeway was a resource of national importance and should be open to the nation.

On reflection I have omitted to mention the Ramblers Association representative. He seemed neither convinced of what he said nor convincing in saying it. He may have fallen in with the FotR but that was not the over riding impression I came away with.

My thanks to all those, be they TRF or otherwise, who felt sufficiently moved to turn out on a November evening to stand up for our rights and to publicly show just how out of touch certain mean and intolerant individuals are. With a ration of 20:1 for the restoration of the Ridgeway without precluding any one user group, the message to the authorities must be clear enough.

Moving on... I was please to attend a Chiltern Hills Enduro Club event to receive a cheque for £500 that they have donated for RoW work. I did stay and watch for a while and whilst I stood I recalled that in the back of my garage I have a trail bike...

Remember: We have rights and we also have responsibilities.

Dave Tilbury

Horror In The Hills

The Sunday Times for 20 October 2002 reports the rise of 'naked rambling' as an outdoor sport. People are apparently "stripping off to job, climb and hike through national parks ... the trend for jogging and rambling naked ... reflects a growing militancy." Bill Strange, a mountain guide, says "If you've got a rucksack and you feel comfortable enough, you can whip your stuff off and have a run."

A trail riders' spokesman who requested anonymity ("I don't want my house surrounded by naked militant ramblers - it'll take thousands off the value.") told B&B "We are really mad about this appalling misuse of our ancient highways. I don't want my members, out for a quiet ride in the countryside, to happen upon the entire national executive of the Ramblers' Association stark naked except for their boots and bobble hats. God knows what lasting damage that could do to some of our more sensitive souls. Have they no respect, these people? Just last week I was out walking Bartholomew, my jack russell terrier, and we caught sight of a naked Rambler flitting through the brambles; the poor lad's been catatonic on the settee ever since. If this continues then we'll have to ask to be banned from green roads for our own protection. There should be special sites set up so that these hooligans can roar around naked to their hearts' content, leaving the countryside safe for decent people.

*Seen in Byway and Bridleway
Sent in by Colin Patient*

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Co-operation is key to transformation of ancient road after erosion left it impassable in places

Riders are catalyst for 'magnificent' repair of green lane

BY ROBERT LAPPIN

TWO years ago, North Yorkshire County Council's attention was drawn to the poor state of the green lane leading from Kirkby in Cleveland to Raisdale and Kirkby Parish Council expressed concerns regarding safety.

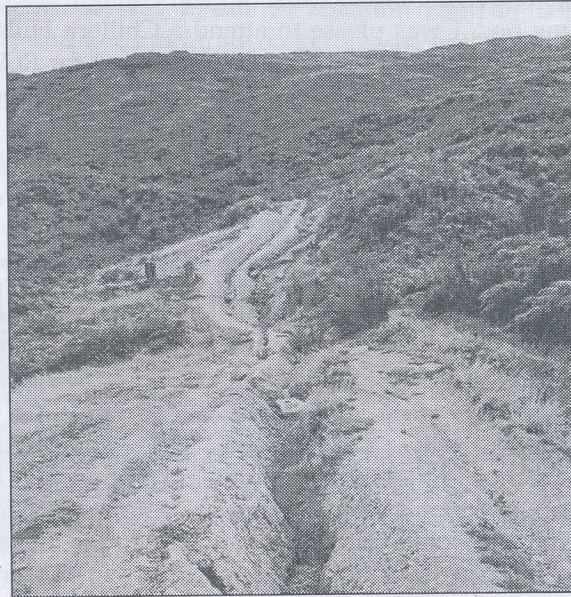
A traffic regulation order was considered, but deferred pending the possibility of finding volunteer assistance from user groups in making good the poor state of the surface.

Groups had previously provided labour in similar circumstances elsewhere in the county, in particular the Teesside and North Yorkshire group of the Trail Riders' Fellowship in the Yorkshire Dales.

This year the lane was again on the county's highways agenda. This lane is the steepest green lane in North Yorkshire, locally known as Kirby Bank (county road TK13G). Over many years this ancient road, shown on the earliest Ordnance Survey maps in 1851 and on earlier maps, had been damaged by water erosion and floods.

It had reached the stage, with 3-4ft deep ruts in places, of becoming nearly impassable and impossible for many of the varied users of the lane to negotiate and enjoy.

This year the TRF offered assistance with making good the rutted surface. Meetings were held on site between North Yorkshire County Council, the North York Moors National Park Authority and the TRF. The latter confirmed its offer, which was to pay for the hire of a contractor to lay and level stone. Also their members, working at the weekend, would voluntarily construct and line sumps, in-



sert cross drains and generally carry out the reconstruction work.

Members also arranged their own insurance. The three bodies then planned this co-operative work.

At the September meeting of Kirkby Parish Council, the plans were explained by Mike Roberts, county highways engineering officer. County Coun John Fletcher recalled that the parish councillors were pleased that action was in hand to undertake this essential maintenance.

The county council arranged for more than 200 tonnes of dolomite stone for filling in the ruts to be delivered to the site and made arrangements to formally close the road for the pe-

riod of reconstruction.

A local farmer, David Alderson, agreed to let the TRF use his land for storage of material and access of heavy equipment, and he also provided sandstone blocks to make the drainage gullies.

Frank Pickles and Steve Young of the national park advised on aspects of drainage for the terrain and materials for construction and paid frequent visits during the work.

The TRF had previously circulated members asking for volunteers and found they could count on about 50 volunteers to carry out the work during the last week and weekend in September. The TRF then made arrangements with Stokesley contractor, JSH Con-



WEEKEND WORK: left, the state of the road before repairs started, and right, gullies are lined with sandstone by the TRF volunteers.

tracts, to hire heavy machinery including a vibrating roller, a dump truck and a loading shovel.

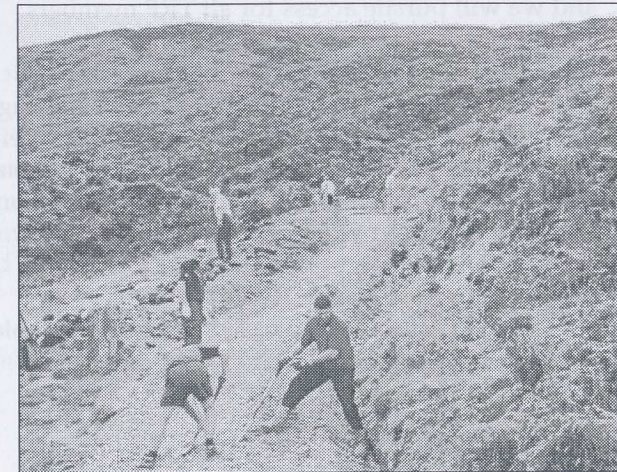
The site was prepared, the dolomite was laid and levelled to fill in the ruts, and side gullies and sumps constructed.

The TRF volunteers, organised in small groups, each with a foreman, were asked to turn up with shovels, picks, buckets, trowels, wheelbarrows, water containers and their own food. During the weekend they lined the gullies with sandstone, constructed and lined five deep sumps, dug and constructed cross drains and generally carried out the completion of the road. Forty-seven volunteers turned up for this work over the

weekend.

Alex Robinson, chairman of the Teesside and North Yorkshire group of the fellowship, said: "We have been pleased to be part of this successful team effort. The TRF members raised funds to pay for £1,000 of this repair by voluntary marshalling at horse trials and putting their fees into TRF funds."

Coun Fletcher also welcomed the co-operation between the county, national park and the TRF. He echoed the words of Mr Robinson in confirming that the road was now safe for all user groups to enjoy, and said: "The work undertaken in reconstructing the road is truly a magnificent achievement by all concerned."



Meeting of the Executive 30th November 2002, Northampton Report

Copies of the minutes will be circulated to all Pos, COs and Group reps. Any other member may request a copy from the secretary.

Location and Dates of Exec Meetings

The meeting discussed whether the two year experiment of moving venues had been successful and feeling was mixed on this. Although it was likely the published dates for 2003 would be kept to, it is likely that the March Exec will be brought forward to Saturday February 1st. In an effort to boost attendance moving the date of the AGM by a week was also discussed.

The Ridgeway

There had been a fantastic turn out of concerned trail riders at the public meeting in Didcot and thanks were extended to all who attended. Tim Stevens had spoken convincingly and constructively on the future of the Ridgeway as a vehicular route. Members are urged to respond to the Consultation document that has been issued, we have until January 3rd to do so and it can be found at www.nationaltrails.gov.uk or from The National Trails Office, Cultural Services, Holton, Oxford, OX33 1QQ. We were reminded of our contribution as trail riders to tourism and the rural economy.

BBTC

The BBTC is drawing up a legislative "shopping list" and our representative, Dave Tilbury will be watching this closely. The meeting was reminded how broad based the BBTC was as an organisation.

GLASS Database

As part of our membership to LARA, the TRF has access to the GLASS green lanes database. To those of us who do have access it looks to be a good tool, and we will pursue access for all TRF members.

Treasurer's Report

John Gardner repeated his financial message from the AGM. He stressed that we have Bursary Funding available on receipt of suitable request. He also thanked the Chiltern Hills Enduro Club for their recent donation and told the meeting that we receive many such donations from groups who benefit indirectly from our work.

Membership Secretary's Report

John Pritchard was pleased to report a sizable increase in numbers since the AGM.

Rights of Way Coordinator's Report

Dave Tilbury reported that he was very busy; the Ridgeway was time consuming as were issues in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Chichester and Bucks. However, nothing is as time consuming AND non productive as members failing to communicate properly or completely with Dave, leaving him to spend a lot of time and effort trying to contact folk to get the whole picture. Members were urged to seek help from their local RoW officer in the first instance and if they did end up contacting Dave that they were well briefed and in possession of all of the facts and evidence needed to advance the case. The TRF is still very committed to assisting members financially who have been unjustly prosecuted on legal routes, however, such decisions are not made lightly and the Exec must be kept fully informed and updated if such a request is to be granted.

Editor's Report

Fred Ellison reported that the colour cover had been well received and thanked the advertisers. Good quality colour photographs are always needed for the front cover.

TRF Publications

Chris Marsh will investigate a new document encompassing the handbook and How to Claim a Byway for circulation to new members.

CCPR

The TRF is a member of the CCPR and Tim Stevens has been investigating this route for counteracting parts of the CRoW Act with the Human Rights Act. The TRF will support financially getting Counsel's opinion on this. Tim will move forward with this.

Bursary Funding and Byway Bonus

It was made clear that any member in receipt of a Bursary could not also be accepted under the Byway Bonus Scheme if any part of that Bursary had funded work leading up to a Schedule 14 being made.

Release of Personal Data

We will check that we are still registered/not registered in accordance with Protection of Data Act.

Membership Secretary Function

It was recognised that the membership secretary's role is of vital importance to the smooth running and financial security of the TRF. We must have a contingency plan in place should any current membership secretary not continue.

Bequest from John Higgin

The TRF had been bequeathed three motorcycles by John Higgin. Colin

Patient was thanked for his help in recovering these bikes from the property and storing them. The TRF was obliged to sell these for the best price and via an advertisement in TRAIL and a sealed bid auction it was hoped that this may be achieved without prejudice.

Map Romers

Tim Stevens is still looking to purchase some of these on our behalf.

Welsh Forum

Richard Stiling is working on our contribution to their strategy document. Chris Marsh is undertaking the report on the contribution to trail riding to the local economy and members are urged to return their forms.

Future Strategy

The meeting took forward the idea put forward by Dave Giles at the AGM to produce (and act upon) a strategy for the TRF, a sort of battle plan.

Discussion identified the main threats to our activity as being S34A, the loss of RuPPs to Restricted Byways (RBs) and the closing of the definitive map in 2026. Other threats included other pressure groups, our own image, apathy, and our lack of profile and ignorance of others (primarily owing to poor signage and general lack of knowledge). The meeting also identified a number of others who we should endeavour to use to fight our corner.

With the anticipated publication of the first of the Statutory Instruments to directly affect us before Christmas, the meeting recognised that action had to be swift and direct. A Strategy Group was set up of John Pritchard, Chris Marsh, Dave Anderson and Sally Madgwick with several satellite members. The main thrust of this Group will almost certainly be political lobbying and Public Relations and members are warned that they will be being asked to become directly involved.

The Group was set an initial budget.

CHANGE OF DATE

THE NEXT MEETING WILL
BE ON SATURDAY
1ST FEBRUARY, GLOUCESTER

All other 2003 dates remain the same

TWO STROKES & SUSPENSION TOPICS

I must say how I enjoyed the series of Rodger Davies articles a few months ago, for I have, from when 'I were a lad' enjoyed all things technical. However I find it sad that we appear to be losing the two stroke from the Western World as I feel it was far from its peak of development. I am not anti 4 stroke, the feel and sound of a not too noisy healthy four stroke is a delight.

I remember riding a 490 Maico (two stroke) moto crosser converted for trail use, well sort of. It wasn't the best example of a sorted motorcycle. Grin factor ENORMOUS, gobs of power from nothing, like a giant elastic band with power that didn't want to stop. Fun, fun, fun!

I digress, I still think that a simple two stroke is viable without all those extra electronics, whatnots and thingamajigs (please note the technical terms). I have ridden a few of the current crop of Trials motorcycles and the power and its delivery is quite phenomenal. Instant progressive power from virtually no throttle to maximum revs. No expansion chambers whatnots and thingamajigs here, a reed valve most likely but still a relatively simple engine.

With the Australian Orbital combustion process now being used by several scooter manufacturers it proves there is life in the old dog yet. The benefits of the Orbital system which uses a pre-combustion chamber is cleaner emissions and better fuel consumption and increased engine longevity. There are plans I believe to sell relatively simple conversion kits for older two strokes that exists in their hoards in the less developed countries.

The origins of the two stroke started in 1878 when Scotland's Sir Dugald Clerk (sounds like someone out of Black Adder) completed the first successful engine based on the two stroke cycle. In 1891 Joseph Day from Bath invented the more efficient and simplified ported version 'the Day cycle'. It's his same basic principles that remain in use today. Alfred Scott in 1904 patented the first two stroke twin and also developed a rotary valve in 1912.

This British development of the two stroke was all because of that blighter the German Nicholas Otto, who keen to protect his interests made sure that anyone who used his system 'the Otto cycle' (four stroke) would have to obtain a license. This forced many engineers like Joseph Day to seek and develop alternative systems.

I think we should feel proud of our early innovative inventors, for without these intrepid pioneers we wouldn't have these relatively simple and in some instances incredibly powerful engines we have today. It's just a shame that this country generally produced such lousy two strokes motorcycles, it took the Japanese to show us how they should be made. They re-invented the two stroke by refining existing technology which I believe mainly came from the Germans. There was MZ influence but I believe the most influence came

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from the Adler 250 twin. This was the one they copied. Oops! My cousin had one and it was the best two stroke at the time that I had ridden, it was a quality item.

Funny, when the early Japanese 250 twins appeared the engines were dead ringers of the Adler!!

Another good and interesting bike I was fortunate to ride was the two stroke Maico Taifun, a 400 twin.

Both motorcycles were tractable smooth and refined which up to then was a rarity.

You have probably gathered that at that time I was well into the underdog two stroke. I even converted a 350 RCA engine scrambles Dot into road use. Dot did make a rare road version so I detuned the engine to that specification. Went like stink when the engine was cold but when it got hot it lost loads of power. Very, very untractable. I fell off three times on the frozen snow on the way to work once, only because to go really slow was a nightmare as the engine was no snatchy. Nothing to do with my riding, honest.

SUSPENSION: I have a view, which I have never seen in print. Oh! I will get to that later; keep you guessing.

With the advent of single shock rising rate suspension, e.g. Prolink and the like, the Japanese must have been rubbing their hands with glee, all that filthy Yen. Fashion is the thing that sells anything and single shock suspension was fashionable, however we did benefit.

Do you remember in the twin shock days when you had shock manufacturers and riders fiddling away with shims and things trying to get rising rate 'damping'. Twin shocks (damper units really) in those days were rubbish, people spent a lot of money on fancy long travel shocks.

I will now get to my point, for in one foul swoop the Japanese, by introducing a single shock rising rate suspension system, at the same time also achieved from a relatively simple damper unit 'rising rate damping'. That's it, cheap to make, one damper unit and a few linkages and nice to look at.

Mind you I do believe there were one or two other manufacturers claiming rising rate from their single shock set-ups at the time but in fact they were not rising rate, the opposite in one case. Something to do with patents and things.

The Japanese were infamous, first for their lousy tyres and their shocks. Older trail riders might recall XL185s and similar models with their awful ornamental rear suspension.

Then Honda and others came along with their single shock models, no more fiddling with dampers and things, even the basic trail bike was comfortable at last, the rear end actually moved up and down. Fashion and economics did benefit us this time.

Peter Wildsmith

TRAIL RIDING ON A LARGE SCALE

Back in July of this year I attended Horizons Unlimited 2nd Annual UK Motorcycle Traveller's Weekend Rally 12th, 13th and 14th July at the Black Horse Inn, Somercotes, Alferton, Nr Mansfield. I arrived just after lunch on the Friday in brilliant sunshine the campsite is at the back of the pub. I made a beeline to the long wheel base safari landrover complete with awning, the organisers I thought? But no two lads from Kent who had left their KTMs at home. They made me a brew while I unloaded the bike (Honda NX650 Dominator) and pitched camp. Two lads from Ireland had already pitched camp and were having a kip before joining the few who had arrived in the pub. At first I thought it was going to be a BMW convention, but other bikes arrived more Dominators, KTMs, Ténéré, Africa, Twins and Sports Tourers. Friday evening in the hall at the back of the pub we were given three sideshows. The first by Paul Pratt his around the world trip took from 1996 - 99 on a Triumph Trophy. Talk two was by Cynthia Milton, her journey was from London to the Taj Mahal in India, and last of all Austin Vince of TV Mondo Enduro, six riders on Suzuki DRB50 around the world trip he had us all in stitches with the way he presented the talk. Brill evening.

Saturday dawned again with brilliant sunshine to the smell of breakfast being cooked, a ride out to the Cat & Fiddle was organised. Because it was the first really hot weather we have had for some time I chose to chill out in the sun with beer in hand talking to other travellers arriving from all over the UK, New Zealand, South Africa, Texas, Holland, Germany, some had come to the event especially or were on their world tour and planned their UK visit to coincide.

Saturday evening again everybody retired to the Hall, pint in hand, for the evening's entertainment. First on Chris Scott of Adventure Motorcycling Handbook fame talking of his experiences in the Deserts of North Africa. Chris Bright, BMW, on his round the world trip which he wrote about in Motorcycle Sport Leisure and finally Karim Hussain, Ténéré 600cc, tour of North Africa, the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara Desert. At one point on his trip he nearly lost his life due to a mixup with navigation and lack of water. He was picked up just in time by a group of Tuareg Nomads. More beer in hand everybody attended the Group photo and camp fire which went on to the early hours of the morning.

Sunday again, woke to brilliant sunshine but alas after breakfast some travellers were on the move. The weekend coming to a close. Then Paul Pratt arrived on his Triumph Trophy that he rode in the 60-70 round the world trip. the 2003 weekend will be at the same venue because it had everything to make it a superb event. The dates may change, check out the website www.horizonsunlimited.co

Ron Varey, Lancs Group

(For more info email rivironmon@aol.com or ring 01204 667288 (H) 07831 302836 (M))

MOTORING OFFENCES ON MINOR HIGHWAYS


Alan Kind looks at enforcement issues and a change in police powers

It is all well and good to have 'police powers'; the problem is too often that these are not applied to the instant situation. One constant refrain from the police is that it is simply too difficult, or not worth the effort in the knowledge that the bleeding hearts of the Crown Prosecution Service will bin the case as 'trivial'. Whether or not this is true, the Police Reform Act 2002 contains a significant new set of powers for the seizure of motor vehicles being used in contravention (or even apparent contravention?) of s.34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. Another radical innovation in this Act is the introduction of 'community constables' as a first line of attack, with special constables and pepped-up traffic wardens also given extra powers to stand-in for the real police.

The 'community constables' must be authorised in what they do, and wear uniform, but it is easy to imagine certain persons seeking the badge, truncheon and gleaming buttons to pursue a personal crusade. These new provisions require a statutory instrument (not yet made) to come into force.

Taken from Byway and Bridleway

See Police Reform Act 2002, Seizure of Motor Vehicles on HMSO Website



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THE BERWYNS

The end of August – not yet autumn, but since we hadn't had a summer yet, it felt like it.

Three of us met, as is the custom, at the Oswestry Cattle Market. It was grey, but not raining. Off through the town to Llawnt, and onto Bwchidonge Farm to pick up the track through open fields over

north west to the Ceiriog Valley, where there are a series of interesting descents and climbs in and out of the valley, before heading west along the famous Wayfarer track.

Years ago, when it used to snow in the winter, the Wyvern Group, of which I was a member, though it's now defunct, got into the local papers for helping rescue a hypothermic boy scout by giving him a lift down to the Land Rover which couldn't get past the drifts.

Next we headed south to Llandrillo, down the side valley and up the stony climb onto the moor where we met the Llangynog to Bala road. There's a nice little there-and-back trail down to the valley bottom. One of our number tried to short cut a corner, not noticing that this would drop him ten foot down to a stream bed. Good job he's tall – we wouldn't have seen him hidden away there otherwise.

Back we went down another lane to Llandrillo to loop up onto the ridge along the hilltop on the other side of the Dee Valley. The lunchtime café at Four Crosses was not far away, but with a mile to go the heavens opened, and we arrived there wet.

We spun out our all day breakfast as long as possible, but in the end we had to go out.

Back up a now slippery climb onto the grassy ridge top, and down towards Clynwyd on the tarmac. I was startled by a Land Rover on a blind bend, went down highside and walloped my knee. Without the pads in my Shoshoni jeans I'd have smashed my kneecap*. As it was the resultant swelling frightened me enough to go to the doctor (not enough to go to the hospital) and took weeks to go down.

Next it was up the back lane out of Llandrillo to pick up the route up under Cadair Bronwen. It was hard work up the slippery eroded slope, through thick mist in driving rain, to the first col, then down and up to the second col. Though not today, this can be an incredibly windy place – I've seen large heavy men blown off large heavy bikes on more than one occasion.

The descent down to the valley proved to be the end of the day's trail riding. Leading, unable really to see where I was going, I dropped over an about five foot rock step. All was well for a very, very short time, then the combination of too

much speed, ultra steep wet grass, and my bad knee overwhelmed my limited riding skills.

Apparently I cart-wheeled three times. I wasn't counting, just worrying about the nasty little click I felt/heard in my ankle. The others got my bike up, Thanks to the support of stiff boots** I got myself up, onto the bike and down to the tarmac. There was not too much opposition to calling it a day, so we rode back carefully to the cars and trailers.

I don't know if I broke anything, if I did it was something too small for medical treatment. After three months the knee is long ago back to its knobbly normality, but I still get twinges walking down hill from the ankle. Still, I suppose I was lucky really ...

Steve Pighills, Black Country Group

Ed * ** Those who don't think that we should wear full face helmets and protective gear please note - not only does it make sense but that friendly smile from a face that was smashed into a piece of rock could be far more frightening than a full face helmet.

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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 Bob Chapman, Tel: 0117 960 9660
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
Peter Hall, Tel: 01405 862616
1st Tues, *The Plough, 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.*

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2nd Wed, *Pied Bull, Farningham, Off A20, Nr Brands Hatch*

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1st Tues, *Hindhead Pub on A49, Charnock Richard*

LINCOLNSHIRE Paul Vernon, Tel: 01522 889079
4th Thurs, *Manvers Arms, Monks Road, Lincoln*

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

NORTHUMBERLAND Chris Moody
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1st Wed, *Capenhurst Social Club, OS 116 371 740*

NORWICH John Jenkins, Tel: 07721 880463
2nd Wed (exc Dec), *White Horse, Trowse, Norwich.*

OXFORDSHIRE Kevin Lindsey, Tel: 01993 823865
3rd Thurs, *The Red Lion, Cassington*

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 Kevin Parfitt, Tel: 01935 427858
2nd Thurs, *The Bell Hotel, Curry Rivel, Nr. Taunton*

SOUTHERN Russ McDermid, Tel: 02380 812371
3rd Thurs, *Southampton & District MCC, Woodside Ave., Eastleigh, (opposite Halfords)*

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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 Phil Male, Tel: 01793 731777
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 Gary Hillier, Tel: 01932 851291
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
Vic Price, Tel: 01380 724651
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.*