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Patron: Lord Strathcarron

# TRAIL

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

APRIL 2003 No. 296



Hampshire, June 2002. Coffee break.  
John Sapsard is doing the talking.  
Photo by Alf Hill.

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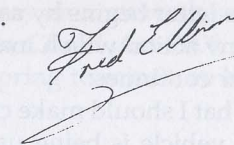
## EDITOR

**Spring has arrived!** So if you still haven't been out much in the cold, icy, wet, winter make the most of the next few months and get out on the beautiful green lanes of Britain (sensibly of course).

Coast to Coast 2003 is oversubscribed as always but there are a few places left on 'On Your Bike in North Yorks'. If you didn't get in on time for the Coast to Coast then do consider this as an alternative. It is a weekend you will enjoy, a ride on Saturday, a breakfast before the event on Sunday and then a barbecue and all for £20. You ride in teams of two at your own pace - highly recommended.

Me, well I'm down for run leading on the Coast to Coast and working on the other half to see if I can have two weekends of fun in May.

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**All Contributions to the Editor ..... Please keep it short and sweet!**  
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# FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

I believe that trail riders have always had to be that little bit more switched on than others in the countryside. Thanks to a legacy of an at best confusing Rights of Way network with poor signing and

incorrect representation, coupled with traditional prejudices associated with motorcyclists and a lack of understanding of vehicular rights by others, the trail rider has long had to be very sure of his (or her) facts.

One additional issue that I felt was not clear to me was the new power of the police to seize vehicles, under the provisions of Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002, that are being driven in a way that is likely to cause alarm, distress or annoyance to members of the public. I have today received a reply from the Home Office and I would like to share it with you so that you are quite clear should you ever find yourself in this situation.

The letter begins by assuring me that the Government have no intention of taking any action which may affect the long term viability of trail riding. The letter continues:

"What I should make clear is that the new provision will only enable seizure where a vehicle is being used in one of two ways that are already illegal. The circumstances where the new powers are available are:

on the public road where the vehicle is being driven without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for others in contravention of section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1998, or

off-road where it is being driven without lawful authority on common land, moorland or any other land that does not form part of the road or on a footpath or bridleway in contravention of section 34 of the 1988 Act.

The powers cannot be exercised unless the driver is both using the vehicle anti-socially and is committing either the section 3 or the section 34 offense. Someone driving in a way that may be considered anti social but not committing either of these offenses is not liable to having his vehicle seized, nor is he committing a different motoring offense.

Before a vehicle is seized, prior warning to desist from the conduct in question or face seizure must have been given unless the circumstances make this impractical. Innocent owners will not be liable to pay a fee to recover their vehicle if they are not the driver and have not consented to and could not have prevented the vehicle being driven in an anti social manner.

The Government believe that the new powers are justified and ensured that they there are safeguards in place to ensure that innocent drivers are not penalised. The powers are compliant with the Human Rights Act and will enable the police to go as far as is reasonable in dealing in a proportionate way with vehicles being driven in an anti-social manner. The powers will operate as a

temporary control of use rather than a deprivation of property rights and represent a minimal interference undertaken in the general interests of controlling anti social behaviour and protecting the rights of others in circumstances in which it appears that offenses are being committed. The new powers are similar to powers which have existed for a number of years to authorise the removal of illegally parked vehicles and the clamping and removal of unlicensed vehicles.

Joy riding and the anti social use of cars and motor bikes is a growing problem which can blight local communities, causing misery and distress to people going about their daily lives. The new power to seize vehicles being driven recklessly on roads, public footpaths, parks and housing estates will enable the police to put an immediate stop to dangerous and intimidating behaviour.

Law abiding trail riders will not be affected."

Ride to the TRF Code of Conduct and be sure you are where you are legally entitled to be and your bike should not be seized. Grey areas may abound with over zealous policemen and confusions arising from CRoW Act 2000 changes (reclassified RuPPs and wrongly represented ways spring to mind), so be VERY sure that you KNOW the law.

Oh and try to have fun!

*John Pritchard, National Chairman*

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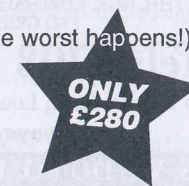
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*Frank Kitching,  
Teesside & North Yorks Group*

## BIKING IN ADORRA

A group of my friends and I have arranged a week long visit to Andorra to enjoy some off road biking. We've already purchased some local maps of Andorra from Stanford's in Long Acre, London and have identified what we believe are legal trails.

What I'm after is information/advice from TRF members about any trails in the region, where to get local advice, good places to stay, do's and don'ts of the area etc.

*Contact Martin Nelhams, Tel: 01322 559611*

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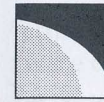
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3rd Tuesday of the month at  
8.00pm.

*Roger Preston (Chair)*



# RoW News

## MINSTED LANES

On Sunday March 9th I encountered Robin Truscott, Northern Area Manager of the Sussex Downs Conservation Board, on the South Downs Way.

The previous Monday morning he had been fetched out to RuPP3358 by the farmer, Mr. Terpstra, to look at damage caused by a 4x4 that had fallen into the stream the day before. We know who the driver of the 4x4 was and he apparently claims that it happened because the farmer had ploughed the edge of the track away.

The lane is now closed to all users under emergency powers, and will remain closed for six months, while repairs are carried out. I am not sure whether the other RuPPs are included in the closure order.

This lane has a long history of problems. Mr. Terpstra has always been strongly opposed to motorised use. The problem stretch, just south of the old railway line, was supposed to have been properly repaired during the recent 3 year period that the lanes were closed by temporary TROs, but I understand that every time the maintenance team turned up Terpstra gave them such a hard time that they went away!

Robin Truscott is talking to Terpstra about putting in hedges to define the route, and do more work on the surface. I have suggested to him that I should apply for a Magistrate's Court Order under Section 56 of the Highways, to force the highway authority to put the route into good order. This would enable them to override any attempts by Terpstra to prevent the work from being carried out.

He is interested in the idea, but has asked me to hold fire for the moment. However, he is going to mention it to the council. It is seldom that Section 56 orders are actually made, because if the authorities know that that someone is seriously intending to apply for one they usually do the work anyway.

*Bevis Billingham*

## LARA VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT

There is currently a LARA Voluntary Restraint on Forty Foot Road (Nash Street) on the section from grid ref. TQ547120 to TQ540112 until 17th April 2003.

URL to Internet Map:

[www.multimap.com/map/browse.cgi?X=554700&Y=112000&scale=25000&coordsys=gb](http://www.multimap.com/map/browse.cgi?X=554700&Y=112000&scale=25000&coordsys=gb)

This is to allow the County Council to repair the surface at the intersection with the Bridleway as soon as the money is ready in the new financial year!

Please observe this VR.

*Clive N Westwood, E. Sussex RoW Representative*

*All Wheel Drive Club*

# Growing Pains

## Infancy

We all start out as little bundles of utter selfishness, no thought of the World or anybody else in it, just me, me, me, barely able to function and blissfully unaware of our complete dependence on those around us.

## Toddlerdom

This is better, we can move around, explore the World, see what's over there, form basic opinions, do things. Still not sure about those other big people though but as long as they let me do what I want to do, do want we want them to do and when we want them to do it and how we want them to do it Life's okay.

## Teenagerdom

Woo hoo, I am somebody, I got experience, I know everything, I can do anything, everything was wrong before and I know how it should be, my way is the best way ever, nobody could possibly have thought of this, everybody else is wrong and I am right. I am going to change The World and it will be as I want it to be and everybody will see I was right. How could you possibly understand when you are so very inferior to me? (Nauseous isn't it).

## Adulthood

Hang on a bit, maybe I am not quite so sure about the 'what's' and the 'why's' of things. It seems that I could have been wrong a few times and that I do not really 'know it all'. I really do have to do 'that' so I can do 'this'. Maybe he/she is trying to tell me something I need to know but I can't quite 'get it'. What am I really trying to achieve? Will I ever achieve it? What am I doing?

## Maturity

Still don't know what I'm doing but what the Hell, I'm going to have Fun. I know what I know, and don't know what I don't know (but I am not dead yet and can still learn a few things!). If I can help I will, if I'm understood great if I'm not great. We all got 'our ways' and I got a goodly number of those but we are all 'in the same boat' so we had better see how we can keep it afloat.

## Old age

See 'Infancy'.

## What's this got to do with the TRF?

Plenty, organisations are like people. They start, grow and eventually die and because an organisation is made up of numbers of people it will go through similar stages of growth.

## (Infancy).

The TRF was set up by a small group of like-minded individuals who had

strong personal relationships and who could 'do their own thing' after all they were only accountable to themselves and had themselves to please.

## (Toddlerdom)

Riding on unsurfaced highways was an activity carried out by a very small, but growing band of people in almost forgotten parts of the countryside and as such was largely tolerated or ignored by the legislative bodies.

## (Teenagerdom)

As more people joined the TRF it became more than 'a few friends' and the increasing diversity of experience and expectations of its members causes friction due to the conflicting ideas, motivations and numbers of people participating in 'green laning'. This growth also meant that our activities have drawn attention from the legislative bodies to which we have to respond and become involved with.

## (Adulthood)

This is where we are now, at the beginning of 'adulthood'. A great deal of work is being done to enable us to make the TRF into a truly representative body for the people who want to ride motorcycles on unsurfaced highways. It is a difficult task. There are many issues to be dealt with, but deal with them we must and will. Now is not the time to act like Kevin the Harry Enfield character.

Rather the teenagers' energy should be nurtured and with tolerant guiding channelled to the common good. A strategy is being formulated for the TRF which will give us a structure which will give us the 'bones' on which we can build a robust body in which we can all live, if not in complete harmony then at least in a degree of comfort. It will also mean we can be more effective in shaping our future and the future of those that will come after us. Some of us will be in the 'brain', some of us will be the 'muscles', some of us will be the 'nerves', some of us will be that little vestigial part that nobody knows why it's there. It does not matter, what is important is that we are all important and necessary to make the whole function.

We can make it into 'maturity' it will take effort, tolerance, understanding

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and the realisation that we all share one thing in common, we want to ride our motorcycles and allow others to do so if they so wish.

*(Old age)*

This is where groups and organisations differ from individuals. A person's life is a fairly definite time, unless your name is Methuselah, a group can renew its constituent parts when needed. If we can put into place protocols and systems to enable members to become fully integrated in the workings of the TRF many problems such as Officer Succession will be overcome. The recent Membership Survey carried out by Chris Marsh has shown that there is a considerable skill base in our members. When this has been fully enabled the TRF will be the strong, able representative body that we need now and in the future.

*Richard Stiling*

*TRF MAG Liaison Officer*

*Bristol TRF Chairman*

*Welsh Assembly Transport Forum Motorcycling Sub Group Member for the TRF*

*Bristol MAG Road Safety Officer*

*Bristol Motorcycle Forum Member*

*The Bristol Bike Show Organiser*

## RESPONSE FROM TIM STEVENS

I wonder if Richard Stiling was hoping to prompt others to comment from a different point of view; if so, he has succeeded. And I almost agree with him.

I agree with him, for starters, that the TRF is facing a difficult task, and that there are issues it needs to confront. I have my doubts, though, about his analogy. The idea that the TRF, or any other club, started in a totally selfish and utterly dependent state is not how I remember it. To start a new club – any club – needs people who are neither selfish nor dependent. In most cases, and certainly that of the inchoate TRF, there was a need to defend what the founders enjoyed, and no-one else on whom they could depend to do it. Lots of clubs start because of dissatisfaction with the existing bunch; in this, the TRF is no different from the BMF, or MAG, both founded to fill a gap. Never mind that, though, Richard has got us thinking – good.

I now come to the issues facing the TRF, and again, I agree with Richard, there are several.

We all know of the new threats within the CRoW Act, and I hope I do not need to dwell further on that. Back in 1970 the TRF was formed in almost identical circumstances – a new Act of Parliament that threatened to do away with what we enjoyed. Several ideas are now in place to help the modern TRF solve the new problems.

So what else afflicts us?

Working this out is simple – the difficult bit is what to do about it. One

major problem is a shortage of volunteers. Running a club requires a steady supply of people who are competent, skilled, motivated, and available, and all clubs are having great difficulty, currently, with finding the right people. What can the TRF, in its own particular circumstances, do about this? Well, quite a lot has been done already, if only it was allowed to work. We have made it possible to pay people to do some of the things. We have set aside money to help the Officers do their work. In both cases, this should help, if treated sensibly. It should be possible, under this new scheme, for someone to take on extra work, for money, and not be described as contriving the situation to top up his pension. But that is what happens. Petty jealousies and insecurities can be very corrosive, especially for volunteers, who do not like to think that their offers of help are being spat back in their faces.

Even when the paid workers are all lined up and ready to go, it still needs Officers to manage them. Just as many as before, in reality, to take the responsibility – the new 'cash' deal helps with the workload, but no way can the paid worker be answerable directly to the Exec and the AGM. And this is the problem, too few want to kick against the pricks, and I don't blame them. So, we still have to find better ways of encouraging all the members with useful skills to come forward and offer them to the TRF, and to cut the nonsense which puts them off. Those at the top must avoid any hint of suspicion, carping, pig ignorance, and general unprofessional mouthing off. Quite how we get them to

### OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS

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A good day out on your bike in North Yorks, including breakfast on arrival, all maps, a BBQ steak and chicken supper, free overnight camping, an evening social get together at a licensed venue the total cost will be £20.

do this, I simply do not know, but only you, the members, can do anything about it. And if you don't, things will steadily get worse.

Does the same thing happen in the Groups, I wonder? Only you can say how easy it is to find a good chairman, a good secretary, a good group rep, and so on. I can see from the records how many gaps there are in the list of group officers, and how many members are doing three jobs! One other thing I can say from my own experience is that I know of several good TRF volunteers who have given up because they were fed up with being put upon. Given up completely, I mean, sold their bikes, everything. Group rights of way officers, for example, who would go to club night, only to be told 'Oh, we met this bloke on that lane you told us about, so we gave him your phone number. And have you got any more lanes for us to do next week?' Volunteers need to be valued, and cherished, and not abused or scorned.

Why is it, I wonder, that we have so many members who just want to go riding, and someone else can do the donkey-work? Certainly, our advertising has not helped, with promises of 'details of where you can ride'. I am sure that you can think of other factors – yes, you – and only you can put this right. Again, Richard was right – you are the brains, the muscles, and the nerves of the TRF. So where don't I agree with him?

Glance back again with me, please, to the dim dark days of 1969, when a

few keen riders knew perfectly well where they could ride, and wanted to hang onto it. They wanted to have fun, but they knew that there was going to be a long struggle first. That is what the TRF was founded to do, and that is what the TRF should be doing now – hanging onto what we have got, coping with the new long struggle, and some of you are doing this. It really is a struggle, isn't it?

In my view, the founder members were the mature ones, and the current 'Tell me where I can ride' members are the ones saying 'Me, me, me', utterly selfish and totally dependent. Sorry, but Richard has this bit the wrong way round, and soon, unless you all do something about it, there will be no one left for anyone to be totally dependent on.

*Tim Stevens, TRF member*

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## A VOICE FROM THE PAST

I was in a pub with a motorcycling friend, we went for the Jazz as neither of us are drinkers. When as a result of a motorcycle club badge he got involved in a conversation about bikes. The subject drifted onto trials and trail riding, the latter being of no interest to him. As a result about 3 months later I joined George Cherry and friends for a weeks trail riding in the Picos.

My trail riding these days is very infrequent though I do a reasonable amount of motorcycling with both ancient and modern bikes on the tarmac. I got fed up pulling bikes out of the mud, especially as I have had back problems. The thought of long runs and little mud for a week looked attractive. I would also be using my Serow.

The week in October was very enjoyable though, I found the pace of my group like the Ramblers with whom I walked for about 4 years, a bit fast for my liking always wanting to push on. I would have liked to stand and stare longer and often. The routes were often challenging and the mud infrequent rocky paths being the norm. Though being the slowest of my group my speed was always accommodated and though I felt I was slowing them up at no time did I feel that there was any antagonism towards me.

Whilst most couldn't do enough of the rough stuff, I was happy often to do shorter runs or miss the odd day sometimes with others or on my own. We would all meet for lunch in some obscure village either by doing the morning run or alternatively going on the tarmac whilst the group went over the rough. The evening activities were usually combined with the other group.

Of the Picos, this being my first visit to this part of Spain. Very attractive and low key, as it was out of season. The area has a large part as a National park, the locals on their 4X4s disappeared down the tracks, some of which the Rangers indicated were no longer available to vehicles. What was very obvious was the large amount of freshly laid tarmac covering miles of what had until very recently been tracks. Bypasses to some larger villages or cluster of houses and the whole area opened up. All I would imagine a present to Spain from the EEC. The character of the place must have changed out of all recognition in about 5 years.

Having returned home I was full of enthusiasm. At one of my old bike clubs a friend who has connections in Cyprus said he is visiting again and intends doing trail riding. Five weeks later a group of 4, the majority OAPs visited for a week. We hired bikes but took our own helmets and riding gear.. Most available bikes were a mess, poor or bald tyres, rusted and where not, unlubricated chains and generally neglected. I think the major problem is that they are pressure cleaned after each customer so that the crud is pushed into the head stock, wheel bearings and forks. We found a place that by local standards

was good and finished up with XL 250 Hondas. If the bike broke down they would collect and replace.

Cyprus was completely different there were miles of unsurfaced roads, usually fairly smooth graded. Do not be surprised to see a high ground clearance pick up truck in the middle of nowhere. All day could be spent on unsurfaced roads without any effort or a detailed map. These appear almost impossible to get hold of, we saw one similar to the 1" but were unable to purchase. By the way don't be caught out by the dark as the light goes very quickly, unmade roads on trail bike lighting may be challenging but was not intended. One of the party knew the area very well over the last 30+ years and talks about the changes and the growth of tarmac, but it does not look as if it was at the pace of the Picos.

Another trip to the Picos for trail riding is unlikely, though Cyprus again is a possibility. Over £900 was spent adding to the economies of both Spain and Cyprus.

Co-incidentally I was talking to John Higgin about a month before the Picos trip. We discussed North Yorkshire an area which both of us had reasonable knowledge on bikes, though not of the green lanes. We had planned a visit in April/May 2003.....not to be.

*Best wishes, Seymour Moss*

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## **TRIP TO NORTHERN SPAIN**

On Wednesday 15th May 2002 a group from Hertfordshire travelled to Northern Spain (also known as 'Green Spain' for obvious reasons when you get out there). I travelled to this area some three years before and did some mountain biking (highly recommended). The town where we stayed was Potes which is a market town with a river running through it and many small streets paved in local stone (pave) with only just enough width for one car. Many things will draw you back as it has me. The town, the people, the food, the best tapas and local trails, the river and excellent restaurants but be warned - people don't eat much before 9.00pm unlike in the UK. Also there is nothing like mountain air to make you feel good but most of all (from a trail riding point of view) the riding has got to be the best in the world (my opinion).

We went on a run led trip by a company called Bike Tours Esp which is run by Grey Rayner and Luke Whitting. They arranged the hotel and the itinerary. They meet you at the port of Santander and you follow them to Potes which is a journey of 111 km. It is a mix of motorway and local A roads until you come to the gorge leading to Potes. The scenery can best be described as breathtaking and the roads as brake wearing. Some bends are tight - watch out for the odd Artic. We stayed at a hotel 15 minutes walk outside Potes town centre (easy to stagger back).

The Hotel Infantado was better than expected with good rooms. There were no problems with parking bikes outside and we were made to feel welcome at all times.

On the Thursday afternoon we were taken for an appraisal ride by Greg and Luke. They pointed across the road and said "do you see those two aerials on the mountain - we are going there". We fuelled up and most definitely watered up (camelback or similar is a must) and headed out. We climbed and climbed until we reached a point 90% up the trail then stopped. After a bit of discussion on whether or not to attempt the climb we turned right and rode up an extremely steep climb until we reached the top. You



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could look down on the town of Potes and see our hotel. We rode for the rest of the afternoon and started to get a feel for what was to come.

The days started at about 10.00am. It's best to do you maintenance (eg lube and tighten your chain) the night before. The fuel stop is 500 m down the road and at the same time you can water up and stock up on any snacks you may require.

What you wear whilst riding is dependent of course upon the weather. It ranged from about 25 °C to 29 °C with only one night of rain. Sometimes it can be cool up in the mountains. I wore full body armour which included chest-back and arm protectors. If you are not going to wear full protection arm and knee protection is essential. Two of our group did not have knee protection and they picked up knee injuries which bled for a couple of days. As well as minimising friction injuries, knee protectors are useful when you have to do any repair at the trail as they are very comfortable to kneel down on. With regards to other clothes a lightweight jacket or motorcross shirt and pants and decent boots are needed. When it's dry there is quite a lot of dust so good goggles or some form of eye protection is a must.

Back to riding. Friday was a full day. Greg and Luke have a well polished routine of leading and tail end charlie riding at a good pace at all times. You are the person who sets the pace taking time out to stop to take photos (a must)

or if you just want to take in the scenery. These guys have been riding here for five years so they know the best vista points. The same rules apply to animals as they do in this country (unpredictable) so watch out. The only differences are some of the dogs in the mountains. These are huge dogs that are left to tend the cattle, sheep etc. They also, I am told, like to herd you so be aware.

To try and describe the riding is difficult. I think its like the Alps or areas of Wales or even the Lake Tahoe area in the US but the best description I heard is Derbyshire on steroids which I would say sums it up to a tee.

There is only one day when you take a packed lunch with you. The rest of the time we stopped at little bars/restaurants, sometimes for a full meal or bread with omelette and

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cheese/ham or sausage (good food). Over the next few days we were treated to a variety of riding - steep tricky climbs with hairpin corners to single track through forests into and upto snow lines on the mountains sometimes having to get off the bike for 15m-20m - hard work at altitude (200m). On the Sunday we started late at noon and did the highest rides upto 2500m climbing for what seemed like miles up very technical climbs and unbelievable views.

A good place to go and see is Fuente De. The cable car ride alone is worth the view. You can also ride to the top of the cable car by another track - have a go at standing on the platform. Another good place is the gorge at Cares Gorge. The walk is worth it.

On the Monday we were treated to a wet day's riding which entailed crossing a fast flowing river eight times. The river was full of melted snow and flowed into a reservoir. The water reached the top of our cylinder heads in places. No one got away without wet feet but this was not a problem because it was the last day and the weather was hot.

To sum up the experience without sounding too over the top...this trip is run by a small but very professional team who look after you extremely well. The crossing was good (dependant on the weather). It was a relaxing way to travel (Brittany Ferries - comfortable boat good entertainment). The hotel was excellent. It was clean, well decorated and the staff were helpful. My only criticism would be the breakfast - I would have preferred less wooden cornflakes and a cooked breakfast.. Potes is a lovely small market town in a superb mountain location. There was great food and night life in good balance (it can be busy in the summertime). I am going to be over the top about the riding which was the best ever. One final point - I forgot to mention mishaps. Fortunately, there was only one major problem. One of the members of the trip high-sided his DR and put a 'V' in the water pump outlet which was sorted out but we had to cut the hose which had split. This put the hose under strain and eventually it pinholed on the last day. The other items that suffered were the back tyres of the four 400cc machine. Three of the bikes - two DRs and one XR all wore out the new bridgestone Enduro tyres with big lumps of rubber missing. The other 400cc machine needed a new rear halfway through the week. As a point of interest, the two guys riding 250XRs said that when they got to altitude they noticed a slight loss of power - nothing too great but worth remembering.

I would like to thank Greg and Luke on behalf of all those on the trip. Thanks for a great trip to Northern Spain. I will be back next year for some more.

Ken Marshall DR400

The other riders were: Glen Marshall DR400, Bruce Steers XR400, Dave Joiner DR400, Mark Verney XR250, Gordon Elliot XR 250

## Wiltshire TRF's BIG DAY OUT on the Ridgeway

Isn't it amazing how certain questions at our club nights illicit similar behavioural responses. The question: 'who's going to lead our March/April/May run', results in much scraping of chairs, studying of feet and ceilings and scratching of buttocks. Until one of the 'usual suspects' puts his hand up to volunteer for the nth time this year.

It's the same with lane maintenance.

Last autumn approximately 350 trail riders attended the public meeting at Didcot to discuss the future of the Ridgeway. You were probably there. If you were, you will recall that we learnt about an organisation called The National Trails Volunteer Scheme.

The Volunteer Scheme is run from the National Trails Office in the Countryside Service of Oxfordshire County Council and is supported by the



Countryside Agency. The Volunteer Scheme is designed to help maintain and promote the use of the Ridgeway and Thames Path. The Scheme is open to anyone aged 16 or over and there are no qualifications needed.

Volunteers can give as much or as little time as they can spare. Volunteers carry out an ongoing programme of management and maintenance work on the national trails, under the supervision of trained Volunteer Coordinators. The work varies with the seasons, but can include brush cutting, vegetation clearance, installation & repair of signposts, gates and information boards and hedgerow planting and maintenance.

Following the 'Didcot Debate', the Wiltshire TRF Group decided to put something back into the Ridgeway that we enjoy and so it was that 10 hardy souls met at a point south of Swindon on a windy March morning. All tools and hot drinks are provided by the National Trails Office and after a swift briefing we were dispatched to commence clearing a length of about 400 yards which had become badly overgrown. The idea was to remove overhead branches and scrub and branches six feet either side of the track to allow the surface to breath more easily. The branches and scrub were then reduced in size with hand saws and clippers and stacked neatly at the side.

Alistair Morris, our coordinator for the day, wielded a pretty nifty long reach chain saw and also brewed a mean cup of tea. By 4.00pm we were finished.

So what are the benefits:

- Putting something back into the Ridgeway National Trail
- Building a positive relationship with other non motorcycling users
- Promoting membership of the TRF to passing trail riders

And for those with an open fire.....a ready supply of logs!

The Wiltshire Group of the TRF thoroughly enjoyed the day and we intend to make this a regular event in our annual calendar of events.

Membership enquiries should be directed to the National Trails Office on 01865 810224 or email [Lindsey.West@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Lindsey.West@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)

*Keith Johnston, Wiltshire Group*

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# LETTERS



## RE: BISHOP OF HEREFORD p6 in February TRAIL

The Bishop of Hereford is a motorcyclist who comes from a broad Church (pun intended). The Bishop is the Chairman of the Hereford Branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England and opposed vehicular use of the landowner blocked lanes in Upper Lye, Herefordshire.

He is actually on a House of Lords Committee which devised s34a in the CRoW Act. I have had a half hour telephone conversation with him. He had objected to the Hereford lane without checking any of the facts and despite our discussion he was still anti-motorcyclists in the countryside.

*Mark Holland*

## RE: RODGER DAVIES ARTICLE in March TRAIL

I had just read Rodger Davies article in March TRAIL when I passed 'The Old Ford Inn' just outside Brecon on the A40 at Llanhamlach.

It now sports a brand new sign with a picture of a model 'T' Ford car. The 1889 map shows the pub as 'The New Inn' on a road leading to a ford over the River Usk to Penkelly. (Were there Irish/Welsh millers then?). I had tried to cross here back in the '70s but due to depth and fast flowing I had to abandon the attempt. I have not tried since and perhaps that's why the Inn changed its name to the 'Old' Ford.

The present owners may not know the origins of the Inn or may have an ulterior motive to get the status of the RuPP changed!

*Richard Thompson, Loddon Vale TRF*

## BON VOYAGE...

Following an advert in TRAIL and having made contact with a member from Kent (who, having worked in France, was bilingual) after numerous phone calls and e-mails a trip to France was arranged.

Monday 24th March saw Keith (Cracknell) and Steve (Neville) Kent TRF meeting up with Silky, Karen and myself at breakfast time at the Chunnel, cheaper than the ferry and less hassle (35 minutes and you are on French roads) we travelled towards and beyond our base visiting many of the War Cemeteries and memorials and also the Front Lines.

Based at Neufchatel en Bray we had found an excellent, friendly and reasonably priced base. Bikes garaged overnight alongside the local Gendarmerie BMWs.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday we rode miles and miles of trails in blistering heat, the only problem being the dust (this was the only reason we had to stop for ice cold beers). Thursday night we ate and reflected on our short and successful trip and the owner treated us to the local Cider, Calvados and then Champagne.

Everyone we met during our visit was so friendly and obliging, having our own Tour Guide and translator (thanks Keith) and Satnav. Operator and historian (thanks Steve) made it even better. Making new friends from other TRF groups is always worthwhile, another experience to file away in the excellent file. Where shall we go next time.....

*Mark Phillips, East Mids TRF*

## SUPPORT?

I came across this letter in the latest edition of Triangle, the Youth Hostel quarterly magazine of which I am a member too.

Good to read that others are not all against the green laning fraternity. I wonder if Denzil Searle of Cornwall is among our readers?

### FOUR BY FOUR

Please take the time to consider the facts about 4x4 driving before jumping to conclusions. Independent ecological studies have shown that damage due to 'off-road' vehicles is really a very small problem confined to a small number of tracks.

More damage is caused by farm vehicles, horses, walkers and sheer neglect than by private vehicles.

In the many years I have been waking, I have seen huge damage caused by walkers. Helicopters are even used occasionally to carry in loads of stone. The odd rut left on a

track by a vehicle is insignificant in comparison.

The use of properly organised driving courses should be encouraged as they teach the correct driving techniques to get your vehicle through without causing damage. They also teach where people can drive legally and responsibly.

The total mileage of byways and private driving sites is a tiny fraction of that of footpaths and bridleways, so it is easy to find places where there are no vehicles. There is room for everyone.

*Denzil Searle, Cornwall*

Taken from Triangle

*Jason Bourne*

## PLEASE WRITE TO YOUR MPs

I want to encourage others to still write to their MPs.

I wrote to mine and got a response from him on the first try. He forwarded my letter, expressing my concerns regarding the Government's intention to stop me from enjoying my hobby, to Alun Michael. He also responded to my letter and I am now a consultee on the Road Traffic Act 1988 section 34a. Is it possible if we all wrote in we could all become 'consultees' and possibly influence the outcome? It took only five weeks for this to occur and that was over the Christmas holidays as well.

I would suggest if no reply was forthcoming from your local MP then writing direct to Alun Michael (Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR or e-mail alun.michael@defra.gsi.gov.uk complaining that you had no response from your local MP regarding your concerns about the effects that the CRoW Act and section 34a of the RTA 1988 are about to have on your hobby may also get you on the list of consultees.

J. P. Willis, Sussex

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**BRISTOL** Bob Chapman, Tel: 0117 960 9660  
4th Mon, 8pm, Keynsham Rugby Club, Bristol Road, Keynsham

**CAMBRIDGE** John Brooker, Tel: 01767 692805  
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**CORNWALL** Sally Madgwick, Tel: 01208 74411  
3rd Thurs, 8pm, The Ship Inn, Wadebridge, 8pm

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

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2 & 4 Tuesdays, The Angel Hotel, Sprinkhill, Eckington, Nr. Chesterfield, Derbyshire

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2nd Tues, 8pm, The Welcome Stranger, Bickington, Nr. Newton Abbott

**DORSET** Martin Diamond, Tel: 01202 571325  
1st Tues, 8pm, Greyhound Inn, Winterbourne, Kingston, Nr. Bere Regis

**EAST MIDLANDS** Graham Chinnery, Tel: 01332 863433  
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**ESSEX** Dave Anderson, Tel: 01277 657783  
2nd Wed, The Swan Public House, Great Eastern, Nr. Dunmow

**EXMOOR** Ian Sadler, Tel: 01884 821547  
2nd Wed, 8pm, The Hartnoll Hotel, Bolham, A396 1 mile north of Tiverton

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**KENT** Richard Colquhoun, Tel: 01634 575090  
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**LANCASHIRE** Keith Westley, Tel: 01704 893215  
1st Tues, Hindshead Pub on A49, Charnock Richard

**LINCOLNSHIRE** Paul Vernon, Tel: 01522 889079  
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**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 07860 302001 (mobile)  
1st Tues, 8pm, The Swan, Heddon on Wall.

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1st Wed, 8pm, Cross Keys, Buckley, OS 117 290 637

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2nd Wed, 7.30pm, 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**  
Roland Wolstenholme, Tel: 01282 432088  
2nd Tues, Pendle Hotel, Chatburn, Clitheroe (off A59).

**SHROPSHIRE** Rob Latham, Tel: 01952 592324  
2nd & last Wed, White Horse, Shrewsbury.

**SOMERSET** Greg Hughes, Tel: 07887 821472  
2nd Thurs, 8pm, The Bell Hotel, Curry Rivel, Nr. Taunton.

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Trevor Gardiner, Tel: 01788 815927  
2nd Mon, 9pm, 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** Phil Male, Tel: 01793 731777  
1st Wed, 8.30pm, 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**  
Roger Preston, Tel: 01429 837093  
3rd Tues, 8pm., The Bluebell Inn, Ingleby Cross, Northallerton.

**THAMES VALLEY** Gary Hiller, Tel: 01932 851291  
3rd Mon, District Arms, Woodthorpe Rd, Ashford, Middlesex.

**WEST ANGLIA** David Knight, Tel: 01933 313816  
1st & 3rd Thurs, Scott Bader Social Club, opp. Parish Church, Wollaston, Wellingborough.

**WEST MIDLANDS** Simon Mills, Tel: 01926 332982  
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**  
Steve Hobby, Tel: 01562 820121 Mob: 07970 929029  
1st and 3rd Tuesday, White Hart, Fernhill Heath, Worcs.